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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 1 May 2006

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2006

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 May 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### HARRY JEROME AWARDS

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** On Saturday I was very pleased to attend the 24th annual Harry Jerome Awards with a number of my PC caucus colleagues. The awards are given out every year by the Black Business and Professional Association, honouring members of the black community for their achievements and the inspiration they provide for others. One of the guests at my table showed me why these awards are so important. Monique is 18 years old. She just finished her first year at York University in English and communications. Her goal is to be a winner of a Harry Jerome Award. I wish her the best of luck, and if she wins, she will be in good company.

The winners this year include: Simone Samuels, Dr. David Burt, Dr. J. Douglas Salmon, Jaleesa Rhoden, Nadija Cheavon Anderson, Stephen Lewis, Joyce Ross, Icilda Elliston, Larry Gibson, Louis Mercier, Edward Ndububa and Winston Stewart.

#### CLASS SIZE

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** I have some very exciting news that I want to share with the House today. The Thames Valley District School Board is helping the McGuinty government reach the goal of having class sizes of 20 students in junior kindergarten through grade 3 by 2007-08.

I want to congratulate the Thames Valley District School Board for making significant progress. In the 2005-06 school year, grades 1 through 3 classes averaged around 20.8 students, and in the 2006-07 school year, classes will average 20.4 students. Class sizes are also decreasing in grade 4 to grade 8.

More than 2,100 schools have reduced their primary class size. Educators understand, as the government does, that children learn better in smaller classes with more individual attention. This is more good news for a government that has successfully taken on the task of restoring confidence and health to an education system that was decaying after years of the previous Conservative government's neglect.

Not only are class sizes getting smaller, there is also peace and stability in the education sector, because for

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2006

the first time, four-year collective agreements are in place, guaranteeing no strike during that period. And more good news: Test scores have gone up. Students are making real progress.

Again, I want to congratulate the Thames Valley District School Board for small classes—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### PHYSICIAN APPRECIATION WEEK

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** Halton region has selected the week of May 1 as Physician Appreciation Week. This morning, I joined our mayor, Rob MacIsaac, in celebrating and honouring the hard work and commitment made by the doctors at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital. Throughout this week, the Halton hospitals are holding celebratory events in honour of their committed teams of professionals. On Wednesday evening, a special tribute dinner will be held to recognize over 600 Halton physicians.

Physician Appreciation Week also highlights another key area of concern, and that is the shortage of family doctors throughout Halton region. Now, Burlington, Halton Hills and Milton are designated as underserved by the ministry. However, Oakville is in a similar circumstance, but has not yet received this designation. In all, another 30 family doctors are needed in Halton due to rising patient need as our community continues to grow. According to the GTA/905 Health Care Alliance, Burlington is growing at a rate almost three times faster than the provincial average. However, despite a commitment from the health minister, JBMH has yet to receive a funding commitment earmarked for growth. It has been almost four years since the Health Services Restructuring Commission, implemented by the previous government, recognized that high population growth in Burlington would require an expansion of services both at the hospital and with the local family physicians.

As we celebrate Physician Appreciation Week in Halton, I urge the health minister to address high-growth areas like Burlington. Our hospital expansion is still pending approval, in spite of the Premier's telling us that it's pretty hard to find a community in Ontario where there's not some kind of hospital expansion—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** Today is a very special and important day for Asian Canadians in On-



tario, as May 1 marks the beginning of Asian Heritage Month. I am both proud and honoured to recognize that this is the first official year that we are celebrating Asian Heritage Month in Ontario after my private member's bill, Bill 113, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Asian Heritage Month, gained royal assent last spring.

For me, the passing of Bill 113 demonstrates a commitment from this government to encourage a deeper appreciation of the people of Ontario's cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Since making Ontario their home, 1.5 million Asian Canadians have played and continue to play an integral role in the economic growth and success of this province. This month symbolizes our appreciation of their many accomplishments and contributions in the arts, culture, science and technology, business and education, and in politics.

This month, I invite and encourage you to share in the festivities of Asian Heritage Month in your community to learn more about the traditional foods, music, and literature of south, east, west and far east Asians alike. As our Premier has said on many occasions, our greatest resource is our people. Asian Canadians are one of many groups that make up and have helped shape our rich and diverse province. Please join me in celebrating Asian heritage today.

1340

### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I rise today on behalf of the official opposition to acknowledge Education Week in Ontario. Public school boards across Ontario are celebrating this week with the theme Making Every Student Count. Catholic school boards are celebrating Catholic Education Week with the theme And God Saw that it Was Good.

This week has been set aside as a week to honour and recognize those who work with Ontario's education system, and we join in acknowledging the dedication of all who contribute to the acquiring of knowledge, the building of character and the development of responsible citizens. This includes teachers, principals, administrative and support staff, and parents, who must always be embraced as key partners in education.

In keeping with the theme of Education Week, we must also acknowledge the significant contribution to our province that is made through the province's independent and faith-based schools. Just as Ontario's Catholic schools celebrate the unique identity and distinct contribution that Catholic education makes to Ontario's education system, we cannot ignore the petitioning of those who are calling on this Legislature to treat all faith-based schools in Ontario fairly and equitably and without religious discrimination, to ensure that indeed we make every student count.

### NURSES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Today, registered nurses came to Queen's Park to deliver 8,000 signed

postcards as part of the Ontario Nurses' Association's Still Not Enough Nurses campaign. I want to recognize the president of ONA, Linda Haslam-Stroud, who is in the members' gallery today, and thank her for ONA's ongoing commitment to reminding the McGuinty Liberal government that it has fallen far short of meeting its promised target of hiring 8,000 new nurses. The failure to meet this election promise is of greater and greater concern as up to 30,000 registered nurses will be eligible to retire by 2008.

We know that Ontario's registered nurses provide valuable, high-quality health care in hospitals, long-term-care homes, community health centres, home care, public health units and other community-based agencies. But these nurses are working longer and harder than ever before, and they know that conditions in their workplaces are not improving.

ONA has provided 12 solutions to the government that would improve conditions for registered nurses and ensure there are enough of them to provide the high-quality care their patients deserve. But the government is not listening, and the working lives of Ontario's registered nurses are becoming more difficult, more stressful and more challenging. Changes are required immediately to improve working conditions for Ontario's RNs so they can provide the quality of care they want and need to provide Ontario patients.

This government has to recognize the potential for 30,000 registered nurses to retire by 2008. It's a looming health care crisis that will have a major impact on patients and patient care. At a time when the McGuinty government had a \$3-billion windfall in its most recent budget, it had the money to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Members' statements?

### DEFIBRILLATION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I'm proud to stand today and introduce for his first visit to the Ontario Legislature Joan's and my grandson, Benjamin Allen Crozier, along with his father, our handsome and bright son David, and our beautiful daughter-in-law, Jolean. They're visiting from Calgary.

At the same time, I want to remind members of a bill I introduced earlier in the session, Bill 71, which is An Act to promote the use of automated external heart defibrillators. I want to encourage the House leaders and other powers that be that it would be a great step forward in the province of Ontario for the health of our citizens and the well-being of those who are found in a cardiac arrest emergency if we were to pass this bill, which protects those who place defibrillators and those who use them from any liability.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to cover two very important projects: one that I am enthusiastic about, and the other, three that I love.



## DARFUR GENOCIDE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Yesterday I attended a rally organized by Canadian high school and university students right here at Queen's Park. Over 1,000 people attended. The essence of this demonstration was best expressed by the Honourable David Kilgour.

The 21st century's genocide has now entered its third year, while the world watches. According to an analysis of United Nations data, fully 215,000 Darfuri civilians have been murdered since early 2003, with approximately 200,000 more dead from disease and malnutrition.

With more than 400,000 Darfurians already dead, will the international community allow this to increase to half a million before acting? To 800,000, as in the case of Rwanda? To one million? At what point will we find the political will to stop the killing, burning and raping in Darfur?

Here is a three-point intervention proposal: (1) Establish a no-fly zone over Darfur; (2) hold an assembly of representative leaders and stakeholders from across Darfur and establish a legitimate and functional regional government for this area; and (3) create an implementation force of international peacemakers, hopefully coordinated by the African Union and the United Nations.

All of this of course will require hard work and focused determination. If successful, however, this genocide could finally be halted and Darfuri villages can begin to rebuild their shattered lives in peace.

## JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** John Kenneth Galbraith was one of the defining intellects of the 20th century. His recent loss will be felt both in his adoptive country and here in his homeland of Canada. His influence has permeated the globe; his concepts of governance and economic policy will be studied for generations to come.

Born in Iona Station, Ontario, Mr. Galbraith served in the administrations of four American presidents as well as serving as John F. Kennedy's ambassador to India. He is one of the few two-time recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Mr. Galbraith understood that government plays an essential role in ensuring the equal development of all aspects of a society. His book, *The Affluent Society*, outlined how the American government in the post-war era was growing in private sector wealth, while suffering from poor social and physical infrastructure, perpetuating income disparities.

This situation is not unlike the one this government found in 2003. The previous Tory government had ignored the wisdom of Mr. Galbraith, to the detriment of all Ontarians. We are correcting the Tories' mistakes by investing in Ontario's infrastructure and ensuring that its hospitals, schools, roads and social programs are strong.

Mr. Galbraith was correct: Good government ensures that all elements of a society progress equally. This

government is proud to carry on that tradition. We express our condolences to the family of John Kenneth Galbraith and thank them for his legacy of ideals.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH  
OF HAMILTON ACT, 2006

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr25, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

## MOTIONS

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership of certain committees.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of certain committees:

On the standing committee on estimates, Mr. Delaney replaces Ms. Di Cocco; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Mr. Arnott replaces Mr. O'Toole; and on the standing committee on social policy, Mr. O'Toole replaces Mr. Arnott.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, May 1, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1351 to 1357.*



**The Speaker:** Order. I need the members to take their seats.

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 121. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Qadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jackson, Cameron	Racco, Mario G.
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Klees, Frank	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Kular, Kuldeep	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	MacLeod, Lisa	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia	Watson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Oraziotti, David	Wong, Tony C.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakubski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David

All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter
Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### HOME CARE

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** This morning I had the privilege of releasing a report which will be crucial to our government's efforts to transform health care, specifically home care services. Home care is a vital part of our health care system, and it's crucial that people know they're getting the best services possible and that the quality of service will continue for as long as needed.

To help make this happen, we needed an independent review of the competitive bidding process used by CCACs to select service providers to deliver home care services. The person we asked to conduct this review was the Honourable Elinor Caplan. Elinor, of course, is well known to many members of this assembly, having served with great distinction as Minister of Health as well as holding other senior cabinet posts in the provincial and

federal governments. It would be difficult to identify someone more qualified in this role than Elinor Caplan, and she did not disappoint.

The report she produced, *Realizing the Potential of Home Care: Competing for Excellence by Rewarding Results*, is indeed a comprehensive review of Ontario's community care access procurement process—the process used by CCACs to obtain everything from medical supplies and equipment to the services of a broad range of health care and support professionals, including nursing, professional support, personal support and home-making, and therapy services for their clients.

Elinor Caplan and her staff consulted with 37 CCACs, 1,000 members of the public and 500 home care clients. They also conducted 200 interviews with groups and organizations and reviewed more than 80 submissions. From that, they analyzed a mountain of information to determine the impact of the current procurement process, and they made recommendations for improving the process. I'm delighted to announce that our government completely supports the recommendations for improving the working environment for those dedicated personal support workers and other home care workers who make such an invaluable contribution to the quality of our health care system.

We will be moving forward on three key areas: stabilizing the workforce, client-focused quality home care, and strengthening procurement practices.

We'll increase the minimum base wage for personal support workers under CCAC contracts from \$9.65 an hour to \$12.50 an hour—a 30% increase—and we will enhance their compensation for travel time and mileage.

We will work with the home care sector, requiring agencies to show increases in full-time and regular part-time positions for personal support workers. This new funding will give more workers better employment benefits, such as increased access to statutory holiday pay, severance and termination provisions and improved compensation, as I mentioned, for travel time and mileage.

We'll ensure better job security for everyone who works in home care by permitting the extension of CCAC contracts for up to nine years. Enhanced job security for home care workers is obviously beneficial to those employees, but continuity of employment also results in continuity of care, which benefits patients; and better patient care is, of course, the primary motivation behind the changes that we're introducing.

Other reforms include improvements to the way CCACs arrange for services for clients, including rewarding outstanding service providers by designating them as preferred providers and giving them longer contracts. We'll also streamline the procurement process by centralizing and coordinating the prequalification process, simplifying their procurement documents and standardizing the evaluation tools and processes to enhance consistency and transparency.

We're committed to ensuring that people who need home care receive client-focused, quality services. To



this end, we'll establish new capacities for local health systems to target improvements in home care, including providing an annual report card for Ontarians. We'll promote quality home care services by identifying, validating and sharing best practices, developing performance indicators and setting performance benchmarks.

In addition, our government will support the report's recommendation that there needs to be a research chair specific to home care to ensure that research continues to improve and inform the quality of home care services.

We'll also support a third-party case management review that will consult key stakeholders, including the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres and the CCACs, to ensure that the system has common definitions and takes a more consistent approach to system navigation and case management.

The acceptance of these recommendations is aligned with our government's ongoing efforts to build a high-performing health care system through streamlined accountability and performance measurement.

Client satisfaction is an integral part of quality. To ensure open and transparent communication with clients, we'll expand the present ministry's long-term-care action line to provide the public with access to an independent third party to hear home care complaints. To this end, we'll hire independent complaint coordinators to hear client complaints and address their concerns.

Home care isn't a faceless, anonymous business; it's the most fundamental provision of help, from one person to another.

These actions are part of the \$117.8 million in additional funding the government is providing for home care and community services in 2006-07.

In closing, I want to say that I'm proud of this report. It gave me great pleasure to move forward on these recommendations on behalf of Ontarians.

## SOFTWOOD LUMBER

### BOIS D'OEUVRE

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** It is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to inform the members that Ontario welcomes the announcement last Thursday of a framework leading to the resolution of the softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the United States.

Les membres de l'Assemblée savent que le conflit a imposé un lourd fardeau sur les entreprises ontariennes et avait mis en danger le gagne-pain de milliers de travailleurs forestiers de l'Ontario.

The members will know that this dispute has imposed a considerable burden on Ontario companies and posed a threat to the livelihood of thousands of Ontario forestry workers.

It has dragged on for far too long. We now have a long-term agreement that will bring greater stability and predictability.

A tremendous amount of work went into the negotiations that finally led to the framework.

Tout au long des négociations, nous avons défendu les intérêts de l'Ontario avec une résolution inébranlable.

Throughout this process, we have steadfastly defended Ontario's interests.

When we first heard some of the details of the proposed framework, it was just not acceptable to Ontario. It put Ontario at a distinct disadvantage and would have meant widespread job loss in the softwood industry.

I said that day that Ontario would not agree to a deal that threatened Ontario's softwood producers unfairly and I lived up to that commitment. We urged the federal government to re-examine it so it would better reflect our historical export volume. I am pleased to say that they listened to us and did so.

The McGuinty government fought hard for our softwood producers and northern communities and was able to bring about a deal that was better than the original framework. We stood up for Ontario and were able to secure a fair deal.

Nous avons défendu l'Ontario et réussi à obtenir un accord équitable.

The framework announced on Thursday takes into account Ontario's principal objective of recognizing our historic trading volumes.

I appreciate the support and involvement of the Premier in addressing this matter. Also, I want thank our team: Mike Kergin, our negotiator, and Mike Willick and Bill Thornton, two of our assistant deputy ministers, who successfully defended this province's interests with integrity and determination. There are many others in the MNR who have worked on this file over the years, and I would also like to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Aussi je félicite mon collègue du Québec, Raymond Bachand, et son prédécesseur, Claude Béchar, de la coopération et de l'appui que le Québec n'a pas cessé de nous donner.

I would also like to recognize my colleague in Quebec, Raymond Bachand, and his predecessor, Claude Béchar, for that province's continued co-operation and support. I also appreciate British Columbia's Forests and Range Minister, Rich Coleman, for working with Ontario on this file. BC and Ontario have shown great support for each other in getting the changes to the framework that we both required.

Finally, I congratulate Prime Minister Stephen Harper, my counterpart David Emerson, and Ambassador Michael Wilson for ensuring that all Canadian interests were protected.

These last few years have been very difficult for all of the affected provinces as we have sought to eliminate the tariffs imposed by the United States.

Ontario looks forward to continuing to work with the federal government and other provinces to finalize the agreement and to come up with an implementation process.



1410

### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** This morning, I had the pleasure of addressing some 2,000 delegates at the annual conference of the Industrial Accident Prevention Association. It is the most important health and safety conference in the country, with 5,000 professionals attending.

This year, I brought the participants some important news about injury prevention and cost avoidance to businesses here in the province of Ontario. Over the past two years, there have been 14,649 fewer lost-time injuries to workers in Ontario. This means that over 14,000 Ontario workers have escaped injuries that might otherwise have occurred. It means that their families have not had to see their loved ones injured or possibly permanently disabled. It also means that Ontario businesses have avoided \$960 million in costs associated with workplace injuries. These costs include employment replacement, injury investigation, overtime pay for other employees and reduced productivity due to loss of skilled employees.

Our goal, as announced in July 2004, was to reduce workplace injuries by 20%. We said we would do this through a comprehensive, integrated health and safety strategy. This strategy would use education, training, legislation, regulation and enforcement. It would encompass all of our health and safety partners. Our goal is that by 2008 there will be 20,000 fewer lost-time injuries per year in the province of Ontario than would otherwise have occurred.

I'm here to tell you today that we are succeeding. In fact, we are ahead of schedule. Stop and think for a moment: I'm talking about 14,000 people. That's equivalent to the population of Wasaga Beach. I'm proud of our government's achievement in this regard. We're at the halfway point of our strategy, but what we intend to do is decrease workplace injuries by 20% by 2008.

The workplace health and safety strategy is saving thousands of workers pain and suffering from serious workplace injuries. With fewer accidents, employers are benefiting from reduced production costs, lower retaining costs, less equipment damage and other cost-avoidance savings.

One key element of our strategy is our high-risk initiative. The initiative focuses on workplaces with the highest injury rates and costs. When the high-risk initiative was announced, these firms represented just 2% of all firms insured by the WSIB but accounted for 10% of all lost-time injuries and 21% of injury costs in Ontario. Our initiative assists and educates people in these workplaces toward healthier and safer work practices. At the same time, we continue to give priority to investigating workplace fatalities, critical injuries, work refusals, work stoppages and immediate hazards.

Another key element is our last-chance program. In 2005, safe workplace associations were challenged to work with the ministry by providing 5,000 workplaces

with a last chance to voluntarily improve their injury track records. I'd like to thank the five safe work associations that rose to that challenge: the Industrial Accident Prevention Association, the Ontario Service Safety Alliance, the Electrical and Utilities Safety Association, the Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario and the Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare. These five workplace associations reached out to provide assistance, training and education. I'm pleased to say that the remaining seven workplace associations will now be joining the original five.

There are real costs that are being avoided. According to the WSIB, each injury in 2004 cost \$57,000 on average. In 2005, that amount rose to over \$70,000. In total, about \$960 million in costs were avoided. Looking at success in other terms, lost-time injury rates have been reduced from 2.2 to 2.0 per 100 workers for 2005.

At this point, I want to thank the ministry staff and those dedicated inspectors, because they deserve a lot of credit for our success. There will be more soon. When we launched the high-risk initiative, we set about hiring 200 additional health and safety inspectors. Right now, 131 of those individuals are on the job. I'm proud to announce today that in recognition of the unique and highly successful high-risk and last-chance initiatives, Ontario has been selected to chair the 2007 International Association of Labour Inspection conference next April. The Ministry of Labour and this government are working hard toward healthy workplaces.

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

#### REVENDEICATION TERRITORIALE DES AUTOCHTONES

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** The situation at Caledonia has continued now for some 62 days. This is a situation that affects not only the local communities of Six Nations and Caledonia, but all Ontarians who seek to live in a peaceful environment. I would like to commend the aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents of the area, who have shown patience with this situation.

La situation à Caledonia dure depuis 62 jours. C'est une situation qui touche non seulement les communautés des Six Nations et de Caledonia mais aussi tous les Ontariens qui désirent vivre en paix.

Je tiens à féliciter les habitants autochtones et non autochtones de cette région, qui ont montré de la patience durant cette situation.

We know that a solution will come easier if all parties remain calm and continue to be patient. The McGuinty government has spent many weeks and long hours on this situation to achieve a peaceful resolution. Many people at both the political level and the bureaucratic level are working to resolve this matter.

I'm pleased to report that the Honourable David Peterson, the respected former Premier of Ontario, was just appointed this weekend to work with the Six Nations and Caledonia communities to find short-term solutions



to the immediate problems in Caledonia. He is meeting with the parties today following informal meetings with some of the parties yesterday. Mr. Peterson will focus on urgent concerns, aiming to restore calm and return the communities to normal conditions. This work will pave the way for discussions on the longer-term underlying issues.

Canada and Ontario are committed to naming federal and provincial representatives later this week to address long-term issues, as was agreed to in the three-party agreement signed by the parties to the negotiation on April 21.

In addition to the efforts by Mr. Peterson, provincial staff will continue to work with the municipality and business leaders. The province is also discussing what other types of assistance might be needed to help the communities recover. Last Friday, Ontario made a commitment to the developer and builder for immediate funding assistance related to Douglas Creek Estates.

The McGuinty government, with the support of Canada and the communities involved, is optimistic that we can achieve a balanced solution to this situation.

I would also like to add that the public can be updated on the Caledonia situation by accessing Ontario's toll-free number at 1-866-876-7672, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Response?

#### HOME CARE

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I want to acknowledge with appreciation the announcement today by the Minister of Health with respect to long-term-care support in this province and to acknowledge the work of Elinor Caplan in her report and the substantive number of recommendations which the government has seen fit to implement or announce the implementation of in less than one year. Mind you, it was 11 and a half months, but it was less than one year.

Minister, clearly every PSW—personal support worker—will embrace their 30% increase, but I do want to suggest to you that we've been speaking to you in this House at length about the need to increase \$1 per day per resident in this province in long-term-care facilities. We've impressed upon your colleague that this government has withdrawn its support for a certain amount of funding for pay equity in developmental services and children's mental health and children's rehab services. So although this funding is good news, it sends a signal to other workers who are marginalized by the amount of compensation as to how much they're receiving or, in effect, how much they're worth to this government.

Minister, you talk about your wait time strategy, and this is clearly part of a potential solution, but there will be communities, like mine in Burlington, which will have to rely more on home care because it has closed almost 50 beds in its hospital. So you're going to be setting up a two-tier type of response for wait times in various communities because of the failure of your wait time strategy

to acknowledge a consistent approach in making sure there are sufficient beds.

I note with interest your need to expand the long-term-care action line and the complaints line. As a former minister, I can tell you that if you're going to proceed with some of these recommendations to ensure that more and more medical procedures are taken on at home, much of this will become coaching and introduction.

**1420**

But there are many people out there who do not feel that they should be removing their own sutures, should be doing their own catheterization or should be doing the kinds of dialysis work directly for a family member. That is perhaps why we need the action line, expanded in order to handle those.

Finally, I would like to thank you for not discriminating between the private sector and the not-for-profit sector and that you will be awarding them, under the terms here, up to nine years of a contract. Previous governments have indicated that discrimination would continue, but I'm pleased that you will not be one of them.

#### SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'm pleased to respond, in the couple minutes I have, to the two statements from the Minister of Natural Resources: the one on the softwood lumber agreement and the other on Caledonia.

First, to do with the softwood lumber agreement, I'm pleased that there is a deal to end the dispute. I'm happy that Ontario's quota, its regional market share, has been increased to historical levels.

I am unhappy that the US coalition will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in this deal. I did spend last Thursday and Friday with the Ontario lumbermen's association. I would say they're not unanimously happy with the deal but they're generally happy, and I think they're glad to see it over with.

Also, I think that it's in part out of necessity, in that these companies, the forestry industry, need some of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been tied up back to them just to survive. Just last week we had another pulp and paper mill, at Smooth Rock Falls, announce what hopefully is a temporary shutdown—more lost jobs brought on by the McGuinty Liberals' limited-supply, high-energy-price policy.

I note that the provincial government here should be doing like BC is doing, and that is looking at other markets. British Columbia has the most proactive approach in terms of looking to places like China for new markets. I noted an article in today's CP saying that in China they've got a billion people. We're making fibre for Kleenex. Why don't we start selling some to them?

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** On the Caledonia situation, I'm pleased that former Premier David Peterson has been appointed to help find a short-



term peaceful solution. I say to the government, why has it taken 62 days? The member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, the local PC member, was there on day two of what started out as a small protest and has built into a large standoff. Frustration levels have grown. Why has it taken this long for the government to show some leadership on this file when the local MPP was there, and has been there many times, meeting and building trust on the situation?

### SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I would like to comment on the softwood lumber deal. If the price of lumber never goes below \$365 per thousand board feet, we have a deal, but there lies the problem. This particular deal, the way it's structured, when lumber prices go down, which they will at one point if you look at the historical numbers, will end up self-imposing either a quota or a tariff on our producers at the very time when the market gets tight when it comes to sales. That will hinder that industry to a certain extent.

The other thing that I want to say that I find reprehensible in this particular deal is the issue of leaving over a billion dollars in the pocket of American producers. It is a little bit like if somebody comes in and robs your house one day, and all of a sudden you find out that they stole \$100 out of your wallet but the cops said, "It's okay. You can keep \$25. The crook needed it."

At the end of the day, those Canadian producers were not subsidized, they were playing by the rules of NAFTA, playing by the rules of free trade. The ones that were not were the Americans, and they should return that money back here to Canadian producers who deserved get it.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** We can get into that. The other thing that I don't like in this particular agreement, and we need to have closer scrutiny of it, is the veto that the Americans are retaining in the deal to give themselves the ability to veto Ontario or BC or other provincial forest policies. That is not acceptable. We are a Legislature. We are responsible for the policies of this province, and neither the federal government nor George Bush's government should have the right to veto what we do in this province. That's something that we need to have more scrutiny on to make sure that doesn't happen. But from the appearances of the original deal, it would appear that the Americans have given themselves a veto.

To the last point, this does absolutely nothing to bring back the workers that have been laid off up to now in places like Smooth Rock Falls and others. This government's got a sorry record when it comes to forestry, and the quicker they come to that realization and decide to do something about it, the better off we'll be.

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I want to respond to the minister responsible for native

affairs. The McGuinty government wants to pretend that it has done something incredible at Caledonia. The record shows otherwise. What we've seen at Caledonia is a government that has not shown leadership and a government whose actions are loaded with contradictions.

The first part: The McGuinty government knew for over a year that there were long-standing, serious land claim issues that needed to be addressed with respect to the Six Nations. What did the McGuinty government do? Virtually nothing. Only after those long-standing, serious issues escalated into a protest and a blockade by Six Nations representatives did the McGuinty government appoint a mediator. But while the mediator was trying to get the First Nations to the table and trying to address some issues, the McGuinty government falls asleep at the switch and permits the Ontario Provincial Police to use force. Imagine this: On the one hand, you're trying to negotiate and discuss with the provincial government, and then the Ontario Provincial Police come in and escalate the situation.

People on all sides of this dispute have suffered as a result of the McGuinty government's lack of leadership and their contradictory approach to the issues involved.

### HOME CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In reply to the statement by the Minister of Health, let me say that the worst thing that ever happened to home care in the province of Ontario was the establishment of cutthroat bidding by the Conservatives in 1996. The second-worst thing that ever happened to home care was the decision of the McGuinty Liberals to continue cutthroat bidding in home care when they assumed government. The reality is, cutthroat bidding has been a disaster for home care workers, for patients and for the non-profit sector that used to deliver so much of those services in this sector.

The minister's announcement does nothing to deal with the inherent flaws in the cutthroat bidding model. Ms. Caplan wasn't asked to look at replacing cutthroat bidding in home care; she was told to keep this model in place, tinker around the edges and give the appearance of doing something, when in reality the major changes that would have to be made are not going to be made.

At the Bill 36 hearings, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario said this about cutthroat bidding: "Ontario's experiment with competitive bidding in home care has been a failure. It has resulted in: a shift to for-profit providers (the share of the total volume of nursing services awarded to for-profit providers increased from 18% in 1995 to an estimated 46% in 2001); a loss of the social infrastructure associated with not-for-profit providers; critical shortages of community nursing staff that are directly linked to system instability...."

Today, the minister should have been announcing an end to cutthroat bidding and no—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.



## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** To the Deputy Premier: As you know, today is the last day to file income tax returns. Time is running out for taxpayers to squeeze even more money out of their pocketbooks and hand it over to Dalton McGuinty for his massive tax hike, the so-called health tax. That deadline is midnight tonight. Your tax grab, as you know, works out to up to \$900 per working person in the province of Ontario.

Deputy Premier, working families and seniors can barely make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. When will we see the deadline for this health tax? When will you finally repeal it?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I know that my colleague the Minister of Finance, were he here, would give a more spirited response than I'm able to.

I find it interesting that the honourable member, on the day before the federal budget, would choose to ask a question about this rather than stand up and represent Ontario's interest in being heard and being on the record with respect to adjustments to the fiscal imbalance. The circumstances that the honourable member likes to speak to about Ontarians—he seems to have lost sight of the fact that much of that money collected goes up to Ottawa for support of other programs across the breadth of the country, and that it isn't offering an appropriate share to the people here in the province of Ontario.

With respect, I'm happy in supplementary to talk about investments in the Niagara region that have been made possible as a result of this government's decision to work with the people of Ontario to enhance the quality of their health care.

1430

**Mr. Hudak:** The minister knows full well that the health tax doesn't go to Ottawa; it's sucked up in the provincial treasury right here in Toronto in the province of Ontario. Minister, I don't think you understand it. In Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, gas today is well over \$1 a litre. Electricity rates are way up, some 55%. Natural gas home heating costs are going through the roof. Interest rates are increasing. Assessments and property taxes are up. User fees for drivers' licences, for chiropractic care, for eye care, are up in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. In total, some \$2,000 more is coming out of the pockets of working families and seniors than before Dalton McGuinty was elected.

My colleague talks about Ottawa. In Ottawa tomorrow the new Conservative government is reducing taxes to taxpayers across Canada, but here in the province of Ontario the McGuinty government has been absolutely gluttonous in its attack on the pocketbooks of working families. Minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** There was quite a little bit there, but one thing that was lacking in all of that was an acknowledgement of what used to be the prime message of that party: that's there's only one taxpayer. But now they see the distinction. They talk about the reality that the government of Canada is awash in cash. Yes, that's something we know—good stewardship, apparently, on the part of the federal government. But still, with one more opportunity to have spoken up, this honourable member, on the part of that party, is unprepared to stand in his place and say where they stand on the issue of the fiscal imbalance. When will they begin to voice a view on behalf of Ontarians in a national context?

Apparently the honourable member is now mouthing the words of one who used to sit in the front row, and one wonders if this is akin to a budgetary leap. The honourable member does not stand in his place, does not talk—will not talk—about a \$300-million investment in the new hospital in Niagara, will not talk about a new land ambulance circumstance for Niagara that he couldn't deliver—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hudak:** I don't think we on this side need to take any lessons from these guys on budget leaks, from what we saw just a month or so ago.

I'm saying to the minister, in Ottawa they understand how hard-pressed taxpayers are today with higher taxes, higher heating costs, higher hydro, and they're keeping their promise to reduce taxes. Here in Ontario, I remember a Premier Dalton McGuinty who looked into that camera and said, "I would not raise your taxes." He must have had his fingers crossed, because taxes are way up in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

I'll say to the minister one more time, you have been gluttonous in your attack on the pocketbooks of working families and seniors, some \$15 billion in additional revenue. That much revenue and spending would make your friend Bob Rae blush. When are you finally going to cut taxes and give a break to working families in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member's starting point on this was that there are no lessons that they can learn from us, but there's one hard lesson that the people of Ontario learned from them at a certain place outside of this chamber, when they delivered a budget that was off by \$5.6 billion. And now the honourable member stands in his place, two and a half years later, still pretending his way through this, still pretending that the people of Ontario do not know the reality. But they do. It is that that honourable member, as a cabinet minister, still owes repayment to the people of the province of Ontario, because his salary should have been docked.

But let's talk about auto insurance rates, down by 13%; and for the people of Niagara, a satellite medical school; for the people of Niagara, new investments in family health teams and community health centres; for the people of Niagara, new investments in residential and home hospice; and for the people of Niagara, more



investment in home supports. The reality of our government is, we're fulfilling our promise to restore—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Despite all the rhetoric, people in the province of Ontario are not getting the right service at the right time when it comes to health care. On Friday, you made an announcement that was solely in response to our wait-time questioning over the past several months. You said at that time that the data was updated; it wasn't. You said the data showed clear reductions; well, they don't. Minister, wait times continue to rise in communities across this province. I would ask you today, when are you going to start telling the whole story and when will you tell us about your plan to achieve your targets, with your timelines?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I want to say, firstly—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** What's that? You're not even in your seat. I don't think you're supposed to be heckling me. I know the boss is away, so those rules don't apply, but I think that rule applies even when he's not here.

To the honourable member, Mr. Tory's comment in the paper on Saturday indicated that he didn't think it was appropriate to offer measurement on the reductions on the median, recognizing that half of the people had the service delivered within that and half of them didn't. So we'll do it on the 90th percentile, which is what he's suggesting: cancer surgery, down 6%; angiography, down 30%; angioplasty, down 7%; bypass surgery, down 8%; on cataract surgery, down 4%; on hip replacement, down 6%; on knee replacement, down 4%; MRI scans, down 12%; and CT scans, down 9%. I ask the honourable member, does she want to talk about rhetoric or real numbers? These are the real outcomes, backed up by science, and I challenge the honourable member to debate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Witmer:** It would be more appropriate if this minister, despite all the rhetoric and despite all the promises, could actually lay out for us once and for all a timeline related to all these wonderful announcements that we hear, sometimes 10 and 20 times over.

Let's take a look at the wait times. If we take a look at what you did last week on Friday, we see that you have ignored the July 2005 data that were first mounted on your site back in October 24. Here is what the Premier said: "Wait times are categorized on the website by procedure, hospital and local health integration network—beginning with the data as of July 2005. This information will be updated regularly." You said the information was up to date and reliable, but your announcement on Friday referred only to data as of August and September. The July data, which I have here, are gone. I ask, why did you not include the July data to give people a truthful picture?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm very happy to answer the honourable member's question. The circumstances are that we seek to establish benchmark data that can be reliably compared. When the first wait-time information was provided, several hospitals weren't reporting, including the University Health Network, which is our largest hospital. The only appropriate scientific basis from which to do the numbers is that which includes the full first-term benchmarking. The honourable member asks when we will deliver on these results. The reality with respect to cancer procedures and cardiac procedures is that they are already being delivered within the access targets that we led the nation in helping to develop late last year. This is evidence of progress. We acknowledge that there's more work to be done on cataracts, hips and knees and others. But I think it's important that the honourable member stand in her place and acknowledge the work being done, not by our government but by front-line health care providers in every community across this province of Ontario. They're working in ways they never have before. Hips and knees and cataracts were all going up, and now the wait times are all going down. More work—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Despite all the rhetoric, the reality is that on wait times there is no plan. You have never laid out for the people of Ontario any timelines as to how you are going to achieve your targets. In fact, you're only speaking about five areas. What about the hundreds of other procedures in this province? When are you finally going to demonstrate some leadership, some vision, and come to us with a plan that includes timelines as to when and how you're going to achieve those targets? So far we haven't seen it.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member waits around for the plan and fails to acknowledge the fact that the plan is in action, the results are improving and the times are going down. She has no evidence of this, except that evidence abounds; it's there for her to see. But the reality is that even if she can't see it, for the 750,000 people who have logged on to our website, information never before available is there for them to see. The reality is that here in the province of Ontario we've introduced accountability—an essential reform—and now we're working on transparency, to create the capacity for the people who own this system, the patients of Ontario, to be able to make decisions which will avail them of the best possible health care.

1440

There is always more work to do in health care, but I am proud of the work that's been done on the front lines of health care by providers all across the province. The patients of Ontario, experiencing better results, understand that there is a focus like never before and results are being achieved as we speak.

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Housing. Dalton McGuinty



promised that his government would pass a new rent control bill, a real rent control bill, within 365 days of taking office. We're now on day 941 and still no rent control legislation. We're told once again that it's coming, but what we hear is that this bill is going to continue that odious practice known as "vacancy decontrol," a gift to landlords, punishment of tenants. My question is this: Minister, can you tell us who was it that promised, "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." Who promised that?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Let me just tell this member—and I appreciate the question from him—that this government has done an awful lot when it comes to affordable housing in this province, which was basically, for the 10 years prior to that, totally neglected at both the federal and the provincial levels.

We as a government reached an agreement with the federal government—as a matter of fact, it was exactly one year ago today when an agreement was signed by the federal government—whereby \$702 million would be made available for affordable housing. That process started in a number of different ways, in housing allowances and new affordable rental housing, and we're doing that work right now.

With respect to the question he asked about rent reform, it is coming and it will be sooner rather than later. I'm sure that once the package is presented to this House, this member will see that it's good legislation for good landlords and good tenants.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm shocked. Once again, the Minister of Housing didn't answer the question. The question was, who promised to end vacancy decontrol? Do you know who it was? It was Dalton McGuinty, in his release Improving Affordable Housing. But what are we seeing? No rent control bill in the first year—a broken promise. Now, what is equally clear, you're going to continue vacancy decontrol—another broken promise. Tell me, Minister, since you're going to give a gift to landlords and punish tenants once again, why should tenants trust anything the McGuinty government says about rent control?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me just say that the rent increase guidelines that this government has set over the last couple years, at 2% for the year previous to the current one and 1.5% this year, are the lowest rent increase guideline that have existed under the rent control system that's been in operation for some 30 years. The rent bank that we set up, by which we contributed some \$14 million to individual housing service providers around this province, has helped close to 5,000 individuals and families who are involved in emergency situations, where they cannot afford their rent because of a loss of job or health-related reasons. Those people have been given help through the rent banks and have been able to stay in the place they live, etc.

What we're doing in the housing area is unprecedented in this province, and certainly a heck of a lot more

than that government ever did in the early 1990s or certainly what the party opposite us did for 10 years prior to this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** The question is about Dalton McGuinty's specific promise to end vacancy decontrol. It's about Dalton McGuinty's specific promise that it would be gone. But now it appears that this is just like the promise to freeze hydro rates, just like the promise to freeze taxes and just like the promise to help autistic children. Minister, why should tenants trust anything the McGuinty government says? Are you going to stand up for tenants, or are you going to sell out to landlords once again?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Once again, this member simply cannot understand or accept the fact that this government has done an awful lot for the vulnerable groups in our society that, because of low-income situations, need support with their housing. We've done it with respect to the rent bank. We've done it with respect to the lowest rent guideline increases in over two years. We've done it with respect to new affordable housing that's been built or is currently under construction. We've done it in so many different ways that I'm sure that when the new act comes forward in the next little while, the member will totally support this landlord, which is going to help good tenants and good landlords in this province, as they should be.

#### SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. We don't need laws for good landlords. But my question to the Acting Premier is this: About four or five days ago, the McGuinty government was saying that the proposed deal on softwood lumber was a bad deal; it was a terrible deal. But then, in a matter of 24 hours, the McGuinty government says that this looks like a wonderful deal, a silk purse.

Can the Acting Premier tell me, when the United States gets to keep \$1 billion of Canadian lumber producers' money, when Canadian producers and Ontario producers will face new quotas and new taxes, how is this a good deal for Ontario lumber producers?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** What I say to the member is that it's a better deal, and a lot better deal than it was last week, thanks to the intervention of British Columbia and Ontario. We made that happen here.

I would have preferred, obviously, if the companies received all their money. That is hard-earned money of our companies right across this country. In that negotiation, you win some and you lose some. But what



Ontario stood for was to make sure that the reference period—that's the period of record for exports—was from 2001 to 2005, so that Ontario retained its average quota that it's had over the last five years. That means that Ontario now is going to be able to prosper, as we're going to continue to have 2.3% of a growing market in the United States.

**Mr. Hampton:** Canada won tribunal after tribunal at the World Trade Organization and at NAFTA. Those tribunals said that the United States was acting illegally, that they owed Ontario lumber producers and Canadian lumber producers \$5 billion. What did the McGuinty government sign on to? They get to keep \$1 billion for their illegal activity. Not only that, but if they choose to in the future, they can put on a quota; they can hit us with a tax. In fact, they can do a lot of things.

Can you tell me, Minister, will this deal stop US lumber producers from attacking other Canadian industries now that your government has rewarded George Bush and the US lumber lobby with a \$1-billion payout that is in contradiction of NAFTA?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I have a feeling that the member across the way would like to be in the House of Commons and maybe forgets he is in the Ontario Legislature. We do not negotiate international arrangements or treaties, but what we do is give input to the federal government. In this case, when we saw that what was being agreed to was a penalty to Ontario that would put Ontario producers at a disadvantage, we stood up for Ontario producers and we won our case. We did that by working with the other provinces and with our colleagues from Quebec to British Columbia. We basically said to the federal government that this wasn't good enough; they needed to make this change. They made the change, and from now on our companies are going to prosper and do well, as the mills and the lines in those sawmills begin to ramp up and hire people back. That's good news for Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think workers across northern and central Ontario will really be pleased to know that the McGuinty government pushed. You pushed so hard, you gave away \$1 billion. You pushed so hard that there can be an export tax on our lumber. You pushed so hard that there are quotas on our lumber. And you pushed so hard that we now learn that the deal gives the United States a veto over provincial forest policy in the future.

Minister, you pushed so hard. Do you think it's acceptable to give George Bush and the White House final say on Ontario's forest policies? And if not, why did you sign on to such a bad deal?

1450

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I know what the workers in northern Ontario care about. They care about jobs and they care about getting rehired by the companies. The companies are going to start to do that because now we're going to have some certainty going forward, because our companies are going to get most of their money back. They're going to be able to reinvest; they're going to be able to help the pulp and paper plants that they need as a chip market for their product.

From now on, we're going to get a stronger forest industry in northern Ontario. That means more jobs and stronger, sustainable communities. That's what we want for Ontario.

## NURSES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In 2003, the McGuinty Liberals ran on the promise to hire 8,000 new nurses. Now, two thirds of the way through your mandate, this promise is nowhere near being met. In fact, the Ontario Nurses' Association has launched a campaign called "Not Enough Nurses" to focus on your broken promise.

Today you received 8,000 postcards from ONA calling on you, as Minister of Health, to keep your promise to hire 8,000 more nurses. Minister, where are the 8,000 nurses you promised to hire?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Let's review the math, because I know my honourable friend is very, very good with numbers.

The Ontario College of Nurses said that in the first three years the Conservatives were in office, from 1995 to 1998, there were 6,279 fewer nurses. In the first three years—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're still not in your seat.

In the first three years that our government has had the privilege of being in office—not even three full calendar years yet—Doris Grinspun from the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario said that nurse hiring in Ontario has gone up by 4,500. Accordingly, I think that there's evidence of very good progress.

Let me talk about some other progress that has been made: a higher percentage of nurses working full-time, up a full 8% since we came to office, to 59%; a higher percentage of nurses under 30; for the first time in nine years, the average age of nurses is holding steady; and the percentage of nurses who are working for one employer is up 4%, to 94%. We have more work to do.

**Mrs. Witmer:** The minister chooses to be selective. What he failed to mention was that during our term we hired more than 12,000 nurses. That was confirmed by the nursing association in the province of Ontario. In implementing all of the recommendations in the task force, we have a track record of commitment to nurses that we can be very proud of.

I say to the minister, I sent you an order paper question: "How many nurses have you hired since 2003?" On April 15 you responded, "Three thousand sixty-two," but you said that one thousand of those are temporary positions. We now learn that 50 more nurses were probably laid off last month—this is what ONA tells us—as a result of the new accountability agreements in the hospitals.

I say to you, where is your plan and where are your timelines that are going to help you keep that promise of



8,000 more nurses? Tell us. You never have a plan or timeline.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The member made the reference that there was some selectivity going on. She obviously managed to forget that it was her party and the leader of her party, the Premier, who called nurses in Ontario "redundant like hula hoops." The honourable member has forgotten about the fact that she sat there proudly, served in that government and voted alongside them on every single vote. This is her record as well. She can't just disassociate herself from those earliest years that she didn't like.

The reality is that in less than three years we've increased nursing employment by more than 4,000. Across the breadth of other health care professions, we've increased hiring as well.

Nursing Week is coming very soon, and during Nursing Week, I can assure the honourable member, she will see initiative for us to continue the trend, continue the pattern, continue the growth, supporting older nurses, supporting the new nurses and making sure—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Acting Premier: My question is about Dalton McGuinty's worst-kept secret—his real energy policy, the Dalton McGuinty scheme to spend \$40 billion of hydro consumers' money on expensive, unreliable and environmentally risky nuclear power plants.

Today, media reports suggest that the McGuinty government is determined to keep these nuclear projects on budget. My question is this: Can the Acting Premier provide a single example in the history of Ontario of a nuclear power project that has been on budget?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I thank the member for the question. As a matter of fact, Pickering unit 1 was on time and on budget.

**Interjection:** On our watch.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** The important thing to note is that that was, in fact, as was indicated, on our watch.

Jim Hankinson at OPG put together a plan that brought that unit back on time and on budget, and they are to be congratulated for the work they have done.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, the minister should read some of the media reports.

Here's the history. Pickering A and Pickering B: projected cost, \$1.8 billion; actual cost, \$4.5 billion. Bruce A and Bruce B: projected cost, \$4.8 billion; actual cost, \$7.8 billion. Bruce restart: projected cost, \$340 million; actual cost, \$720 million. Darlington: projected cost, \$4 billion; actual cost, \$14.3 billion. Pickering restarts: over budget.

Bloated cost overruns and an environmentally risky strategy: Can you tell the people of Ontario what's going to be different this time that hasn't happened before in Ontario's history?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** As a matter of fact, when you look at the history around the nuclear industry, one of the greatest challenges that did exist was the political interference in many of those cost overruns. I think Darlington is a really good example, when you go back and look at the interference in terms of the production when it was brought on line.

The other issue, though, I think that it is important to recognize is that Pickering unit 1 was brought in on time, on budget and under this government's watch, and that in fact OPG is to be commended for the work that they have undertaken. There is no question that it is a serious business and they take it seriously. They have put together a far better plan. They have worked very closely with the industry, they have learned and profited from issues in the past, and I think we have a level of comfort in knowing that they can proceed in the future. No decisions have been made when it comes to the mixed fuel supply report, but when in fact they are, I'm sure the member will have something to say at that time.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers. Minister, as you are aware, the city of Toronto saw several instances of gang-related gun violence, particularly last summer. I myself had the unfortunate duty of attending the funerals of four young men from my own community of Etobicoke North, so I consider this matter urgent.

I was therefore heartened to have been able to welcome the Premier to my riding this past Saturday. We were at the Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Premier announced on behalf of our government a new Down with Guns program. This is part of our government's ongoing efforts to address this issue. Minister, would you please inform this chamber about this initiative, this component of our anti-violence strategy?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** The member from Etobicoke North will recall that in January of this year, the Premier and I met with a coalition of faith leaders here in Toronto as well as with Dr. Rivers, a minister from Boston, and we looked at the issues that we had been and have been experiencing. We requested that the coalition provide us with a strong proposal as to what they could bring to the table to help our young people, particularly those who are at risk but not actually in trouble with the law.

1500

I'm really pleased that the faith community—the Coalition of Christian Leaders—and the Toronto Community Foundation did bring forward a proposal, a strategy that will focus very strongly on mentorship in the



areas of family, education, employment and helping young people to understand their civic rights and responsibilities.

**Mr. Qaadri:** Thank you again, Minister, for your commitment to this urban challenge. With the leadership of the faith community, I trust this innovative initiative will provide youth with greater opportunities and alternatives, something particularly needed in ridings such as my own, Etobicoke North. But this initiative is part of an overall program and strategy to address the causes of crime and provide opportunities to help our young people achieve their potential. Would you please inform this House about other initiatives of our government to address getting tough on the causes of crime?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** This initiative is one of several, actually. A couple of months ago, for example, we announced a youth opportunities strategy that will focus on employment opportunities—some very unique programs. I want to mention one, which is the first of its kind in Canada, called youth in policing, starting in Toronto and expanding to other parts of the province next year. In Toronto alone, 100 young people will have the opportunity to work with the Toronto Police Service for the summer, building relationships and learning more about policing. It's really exciting how well this has been received. Toronto police have received more than 1,000 applications for these positions. We are also offering more in the way of summer employment, mentorship opportunities and mediation-type opportunities. We are working to keep kids in school until 18, learning to ensure that when they do leave school, they're in a good position to contribute to their communities.

#### ENERGY RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Today is the day when consumers across the province will again start to feel the effects of your failed energy policy. On top of the health tax that your government has forced them to pay—higher taxes and fees—today they will start to feel the pinch of a further 16% in hydro rates across this province; 55% since your government has taken office.

Minister, we know that this is a result of your failed energy policy and your irresponsible promise to shut down almost 25% of our generational capacity. People across this province need to know, as they face job layoffs and ever-increasing costs across this province—and you know the numbers, Minister; you have the data—what they can expect going forward for hydro rate increases in this province this year, next year and beyond? Please tell them, Minister.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I thank the member for his question. He does give new meaning to the words “new math,” though. The average increase across the province is 10%, and it does vary. There's no question that this is the first time you have had both distribution and rate increases at the same time.

There are ways and means that we can help people mitigate those costs. The first thing we did was put in

\$100 million which will actually serve up to 1.5 million low-income and fixed-income people. The other thing we have done is put a 100-megawatt directive with the Ontario Power Authority, again specific to social housing and low income or fixed income. That actually puts out a rate of about 1.8 cents per kilowatt hour, where we will replace their refrigerators, stoves and windows, and look at ways to mitigate their costs. We do have in place, as well, a long-term strategy, working with LIEN, the low-income groups, on how we can work with and put together a far more comprehensive policy, to deal with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I'm not really sure what the minister was trying to tell us, but do you know what? I don't think Ontarians are sure either. They are seeing a price increase today of 16%—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order. I need to be able to hear the member ask his question.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That's greatly appreciated, Speaker.

Minister, your answer does not wash. People in this province are facing job layoffs. And you know what? Under your government there are going to be a lot more of those low-income people who need help because they're going to be losing their jobs under your energy policy and your taxation policy.

Skyrocketing property taxes under your regime, and skyrocketing fuel costs—add those to skyrocketing hydro costs, and people in this province don't know where they're going to turn under this government. Where can we expect to see, under a policy that sees energy replacements in this province from unreliable sources, such as your Premier saying wind, or volatile sources such as natural gas that have seen increases in Massachusetts of 32%—where can we see prices going forward in this province so that people have some idea of how much more money you're going to be taking out of their pockets?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** The first thing we're going to do is be a little more up front with the people of Ontario. Rather than hiding \$1 billion, like you did with an artificial rate cap, and then trying to put together a market with antiquated Ontario power, we in fact have been straight. We will maximize our existing transmission and generation. We will build new, and we've already put in place a—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Where's the transmission, Donna?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I said, we will maximize existing transmission and generation, build new, and create a conservation culture.

The difference that we will do is we will actually put the price up front so people know the real price of electricity that they have. We will not hide it in an artificial debt that was \$24 billion and finally is coming down for the first time in many years, and we will be able to say to them that there are ways to mitigate those costs because we will put in place, and have put in place, strong conservation initiatives for the people of this province.



## CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** For the Minister of Children and Youth Services: Minister, here's a very sad children's story. In the land of Ontario, long ago, before Stephen Harper came to power and even before Paul Martin came to power, a man named Dalton McGuinty promised 25,000 new child care spaces in Ontario. He promised to invest \$300 million of his own provincial money, not federal money. Three years later, he broke that promise, even though he had enough money to keep it—a \$3-billion budget windfall last year. Minister, how will this story end? Are you ever going to keep your promise to fund child care in Ontario?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** It sounds like the member from Hamilton East should, in fact, take up storytelling. It seems to be a passion of hers.

In spite of the fact that the federal government has announced that they will cancel the five-year agreement they struck with Ontario, I'm really quite pleased to say that our province has committed to maintain and sustain every single space that will have been created by September of this year. That represents 14,873 new spaces, about 59% of the three-year target. We will make wage improvements. We will increase the number of subsidies, enabling more families to access child care. I am very proud of our province's leadership on this file.

**Ms. Horwath:** Minister, the bottom line is, you're not committed to the 25,000 spaces that you promised when you were running for election. Other provinces, however—notably Quebec—have decided to press forward with their own plans. As Carol Goar notes in the Toronto Star today, your government “professes to believe that preschool learning is one of the smartest investments a government can make.” Assuming you still believe that, when are you going to keep your promise to fund child care spaces in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** If the member was truly sincere about this issue, she and her party would be standing by their federal colleagues in calling for the government of Canada to honour the agreement that we worked, really hard to establish for parents and children in the province of Ontario. So I question the agenda, I question the intent, I question the politics, when in fact nobody in her party has stood up on behalf of parents and children to honour a \$1.9-billion commitment that our government worked hard—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Minister. Stop the clock. I think we are in danger of imputing too many motives—any motives. There was more than one.

**Mr. Kormos:** All you have to do is impute one.

**The Speaker:** Exactly.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** That's not very helpful either. I remind members that all members here are honourable members, that all intentions here are honourable and that all dis-

cussions need to take place through the chair, through the Speaker.

New question.

1510

## LANGUE ET CULTURE FRANÇAISES

**M. Richard Patten (Ottawa—Centre):** Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Dans les dernières semaines à Ottawa, plusieurs activités et événements clés ont eu lieu dans la communauté francophone. Le lancement de l'Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario a eu lieu, représentant l'aboutissement d'un long processus de réflexion collective et de rassemblement des francophones autour d'une vision partagée.

La finale de l'émission *Francoeur*, le premier téléroman franco-ontarien, a été célébrée lors d'une levée de fonds pour la Fondation franco-ontarienne. Le projet des Monuments de la francophonie, qui érigera des structures honorant les Franco-Ontariens, a annoncé les six premiers sites retenus. Il y a eu le lancement officiel de l'Amicale francophone d'Ottawa vendredi dernier.

La francophonie dans la région d'Ottawa se porte bien. Mais que fait votre gouvernement pour appuyer ces initiatives?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones):** Je voudrais remercier le député d'Ottawa—Centre qui est, on le connaît bien, un francophile très engagé.

Oui, en effet, il y a un mois passé j'étais au lancement du nouvel organisme l'AFO, qui remplace l'ACFO. C'est un nouveau point de départ pour les francophones en Ontario. Les francophones parleront haut et fort et parleront avec une voix à travers cet organisme.

Cette fin de semaine, vendredi, j'étais à l'ouverture et au lancement de l'Amicale francophone d'Ottawa, justement, dans Ottawa—Centre, un organisme qui va prôner et reconnaître les francophones de la région.

Pour ce qui est de l'appui des initiatives de notre gouvernement, notre gouvernement récemment a contribué 50 000 \$ au Festival franco-ontarien pour justement appuyer le relancement du festival.

De plus, on a donné 140 000 \$—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary.

**M. Patten:** Je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement fait sa part pour appuyer les initiatives à Ottawa, là où il y a la plus grande population francophone de la province en fait des nombres.

Il est temps que le gouvernement ontarien se met à appuyer les francophones de la province. La population de l'Ontario comprend un demi-million de francophones, une importante communauté dont l'apport est à la fois économique, culturel et social.

En cette année de l'anniversaire de la Loi 8, Loi sur les services en français, où nous avons lieu de célébrer les accomplissements et les acquis de la communauté



franco-ontarienne, que fait votre gouvernement afin d'encourager, de promouvoir et d'appuyer la francophonie en Ontario?

**L'hon. M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur:** En effet, cette année nous allons célébrer le vingtième anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français. Il y a beaucoup d'événements qui vont avoir lieu pour célébrer le vingtième anniversaire parce que le gouvernement veut mettre l'accent sur la mobilisation, et puis reconnaître ce que les francophones ont apporté ici en Ontario.

De concert avec le ministère des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration, le gouvernement de l'Ontario va inaugurer un prix qui va être décerné à des francophiles et francophones qui ont contribué à l'essor du fait français en Ontario. La période de nomination se terminera à la fin de juin.

La semaine dernière, j'assistais au Festival franco-ontarien de théâtre en milieu scolaire, qui aussi regroupait toutes les écoles secondaires francophones dans la région pour un festival de théâtre.

Toutes ces initiatives et encore plus seront—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, you will recall that in September 2004, your predecessor announced the accelerated closure of Ontario's three remaining residential institutions for adults with severe developmental disabilities, including Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls in my riding.

When that announcement was made, the group which represented the people who were in this residential care centre were not consulted. They're called the Rideau Regional Centre Association. They represent some of the 400 people who are left in this institution—their brothers, sisters, children, cousins etc. On April 18, this group asked to meet with you at Rideau Regional Centre. Will you meet with them at Rideau Regional Centre?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I have to remind the member of the opposition party that the decision to close the Rideau Regional Centre was taken many years ago and was supported by his government.

I wanted to also say that, yes, I will be going to the Rideau Regional Centre this coming Friday. Four weeks into my new position, I'm going. I have been there before, but I'm going back. Of course, the decisions and the opinions of the parents of these individuals will be taken into consideration when a decision will be taken on where these people are going to be placed. So there will be a full consultation, and we wanted to make sure that these individuals will be placed in the most appropriate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Sterling:** The minister should not be caught up by the rhetoric of her predecessor, because there were very

few people who were discharged from any of these three institutions in the last 10 years. You have accelerated that process.

In 2004, your predecessor promised that all of the relevant ministries would be brought to the table with the community to ensure the economic impact of the closures would not affect those communities too greatly. In the town of Smiths Falls, of 9,000 people, Rideau Regional Centre employs 840 people. When this centre closes, they will lose their jobs, and it will be a catastrophe for Smiths Falls. Minister, when will you and your cabinet colleagues release your plan, as promised, for Smiths Falls and the communities affected by the closure of Rideau Regional Centre?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** I just wanted to correct what the member said. Since the decision was taken to close this centre, already 6,000 people were placed into the community, so for the three centres together, 6,000, and recently there were another 130 who were placed out in the community. I remind the member of the opposition again that this decision was supported by the three parties: by the Tories, by the NDP, and by our party.

We are going to proceed. As you know, there was a decision from the court that supported what we are doing and also congratulated the staff for the good work they have done and—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

1520

#### WASTE DIVERSION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** My question today is for the Minister of the Environment. York and Durham regions are presently pushing forward with plans to incinerate municipal waste. Meanwhile, your government is absolutely nowhere with respect to your promise to divert 60% of waste from landfills. Your failure to act means communities across the province are faced with the spectre of new incinerators and more pollution.

Minister, how can you allow incineration when you have done nothing to keep your promise to divert 60% of waste from landfills?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I am so pleased to have a chance to talk about the waste diversion in Ontario. Perhaps the member opposite missed the speech I gave last week, when I spoke to Waste Diversion Ontario at their AGM and, at that meeting, indicated the next two steps we will be taking with respect to waste diversion in this province. We will be building on the fantastic work that Waste Diversion Ontario has done with respect to the blue box program, being the first government, as we are, to ensure that they have funding—\$60 million in 2005. We will be moving forward with programs to divert household hazardous waste, building on the success of the blue box program and the electronics program. Perhaps my friend might like to do a little bit of research before he asks questions with respect to the state of diversion in the province



because, as of last week, we are moving forward on two very exciting projects.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Minister, in 2004 you failed to implement a used tire recycling program. You're now proposing to allow Lafarge, a multinational cement company, to burn scrap tires in their Bath, Ontario cement kiln, despite studies showing that burning tires can dramatically increase emissions of dioxins and metals into the environment, and despite objections from local residents and provincial environmental groups. How can you consider allowing tires to be burned in Bath when you failed to deliver a tire recycling program?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** Perhaps, since my friend is jumping around in a number of areas, I will speak to the issue of the Durham/York plan. As you know, I have repeatedly said that our government is open to the examination of new technology, and that if municipalities, in managing their municipal waste, want to bring forward an application with respect to new technology, we'd be pleased to receive it.

Let me tell him what the chair, Roger Anderson, said about the recent approval we put in place: "We are very pleased to have the government's support on this environmental assessment. Thanks to the leadership of the Honourable Minister Broten, we can now move forward with the Durham/York residual waste study. With this work plan approval, the regions can now work towards a plan that delivers a made-in-Ontario solution for waste disposal."

With respect to the Lafarge facility, I say to the people in the Bath community and beyond that the process is underway. There's an opportunity for them to comment. I invite them to do so, and I will look at the entirety of the comments that come before me as I make my decisions.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. A little more than a week ago, the Sault Area Hospital and Infrastructure Ontario issued a request for qualifications to shortlist bidders for the new Sault Area Hospital. This major milestone on the way to a new publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable hospital for my community is wonderful news, and I applaud you, Minister Smitherman and the Premier for the commitment you have demonstrated to the project thus far.

As you are aware, using the alternate financing and procurement strategy clearly outlined in the Building a Better Tomorrow framework, we are able to undertake numerous projects to replace and modernize our vital public infrastructure. But despite such great news, some individuals continue to question the AFP approach. Can you please clarify our government's position on the ownership of the Sault Area Hospital?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for the question. The Sault Area Hospital, like all hospitals in the

province of Ontario, will not only be publicly owned but publicly controlled and publicly accountable through local hospital boards. Any suggestion to the contrary is simply incorrect, and any effort to deny the good people of the Soo access to a publicly owned, modern, state-of-the-art facility will be resisted, certainly by myself and by our government.

The facts speak for themselves: The title of the building and the land will be held by the hospital corporation. Any decision related to the operations and management will be made by the local hospital board. In other words, the Sault-Area Hospital will be publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable, end of sentence, full stop, period, right there. The McGuinty government has affirmed and reaffirmed its commitment to a strong public health care system, and I'm happy to repeat again for this member and for the entire Legislature that we champion a public health care system.

**Mr. Oraziotti:** Thank you, Minister. I appreciate your unequivocal clarification of our government's commitment to the public ownership, control and accountability of all hospitals in Ontario, including, of course, the Sault-Area Hospital.

It also appears that others support the AFP process. On CBC news, John Tory said, "I think the principle of what's being done here is right." Former NDP finance minister Floyd Laughren said on TVO, "I don't think it's in their interests to resist it. It's a knee-jerk reaction that doesn't make sense. I don't understand resisting letting the public sector use those funds."

But Minister, there have also been some suggestions that employees of the new Sault-Area Hospital will lose their union protection and status. Can you please clarify this issue for our community?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm only too happy to, because this government has demonstrated time and again deep respect for the crucial role that our unions play in the delivery of important public services, and this respect also applies to the new hospital projects in the Soo and all across the province of Ontario.

Employees in the new Sault-Area Hospital will continue to have the terms and conditions of their existing collective agreements honoured, and they will continue to be represented by the current collective bargaining agent. We are proud of the approach that we're taking to building this new hospital. I'm especially proud of our commitment to public ownership, control and accountability. We as a government are very proud of our respectful approach to labour relations. Unlike the NDP, unlike the Tories' approach to P3s, the McGuinty government's made-in-Ontario AFP approach to leveraging private sector expertise and innovation ensures that the fundamental values and priorities of Ontarians are enshrined and protected. That is, all hospitals will be publicly owned, controlled and accountable; all terms and conditions—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.



## AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Last Thursday, I met with farmers in my riding who represent a cross-section of the commodity groups in this province. They want to know, after almost three years in office, why there is no long-term vision or plan for agriculture in this province, and particularly they would like to see a vision that says that your government will do everything in its power to save the family farm in Ontario. They want to know also why you're not leading discussions with respect to CAIS with the federal government.

With respect to CAIS, Minister, you know that CAIS isn't working for the grains and oilseeds producers. They would like to know why you're not bringing forward the risk management plan that they've suggested.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm happy that I have the opportunity to respond to the honourable member. I am sure that when you had these discussions with the farmers in your community, you were able to remind them of the commitment of this government, and our—not just our desire, but on many occasions I have personally met with the federal Minister of Agriculture to make it very clear that we need both a short-term plan, for the immediate need, and a longer-term plan, and indeed that the CAIS program needs to be repaired. There's no doubt about that. Ontario has brought those concerns to the federal-provincial table.

We are looking forward to going back to Newfoundland in June to have all of the members of that table—our bureaucrats are bringing us recommendations on that. So remember, honourable member, in our budget we have a commitment to a long-term strategy. We've asked the federal government to come to the table. I'm sure you reminded them of that when you spoke with them.

1530

## PETITIONS

### LANDFILL

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** It's my pleasure to introduce a petition today. I was in my riding of Nepean–Carleton on the weekend and some members of the community, in particular Gilles Charles and others in Stittsville, wanted me to bring this petition to the floor of the Legislature.

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area," and the MPPs, Norm Sterling and Lisa MacLeod, "all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned, support our local representatives and petition the Minister of the Environment not to approve the expansion of the Carp landfill and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I support it wholeheartedly.

### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and especially the Minister of Government Services. It reads as follows—and I just want to add that it was given to me by the Consumer Federation Canada, a very important organization:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information, such as SIN numbers and credit card numbers.

"(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

"(3) Credit bureaus should" also and "only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

"(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate."

Since I agree with this wholeheartedly, I am indeed delighted to sign this petition.

### LANDFILL

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** To the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and



"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area, Eli El-Chantiry and Peggy Feltmate," and the MPPs, Norm Sterling and Lisa MacLeod, "all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned, support our local representatives and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that the Ministry of the Environment does not approve the expansion of the Carp landfill and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I support that, and I know the member for Ottawa Centre does as well.

### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'd like to thank Balraj Cheema of Mississauga for having collected the signatures for me. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

"Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

"Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature to it and ask page Haakim to carry it for me.

### HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 1999; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

Obviously, I agree with that petition, and I have signed it.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I have 93 signatures on this petition:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years...."

I affix my signature to this petition.

### RECYCLING

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas waste from Ontario public schools that could otherwise be recyclable is contributing to increased landfill sites; and

"Whereas diverting waste is critical to sustaining a healthy environment now and in the future; and

"Whereas there is a need to encourage recycling initiatives in all schools; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by the geography club from Georgetown District High School under Making the Grade will require all Ontario school boards to have two recycling bins in each classroom, one for paper and one for drinking containers. As well, cafeterias must have adequate recycling containers outlining items acceptable to be recycled;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member's bill that will amend the Ontario school boards education act to divert waste from Ontario high school classrooms and cafeterias."

I'm very pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** The petition I'm presenting to you today was signed by hundreds of residents in my riding of Davenport. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Portuguese Canadians number 171,545 in the Toronto census metropolitan area, many of whom encounter serious barriers (language, culture and location) to accessing community and long-term-care services; and

"There are no long-term-care homes dedicated to the needs of Portuguese-Canadian seniors; and

"Camões House for the Aged and Portuguese Community Centre of Toronto is proposing a partnership with a local long-term-care provider to purchase up to 160 existing beds in the Toronto area (for a nominal fee), to develop a Portuguese-Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto. This partnership is tentative and is dependent on the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, his staff, and members of the Legislature to support the Camões proposal, and to make the appropriate administrative and policy changes required to develop a Portuguese-Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto."

Since I agree, I'm very delighted to sign this petition.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years."

I have signed that in support.

1540

#### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

"Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

"Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services."

I support this petition, and page Billy is going to carry this over.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care



homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

As I am in complete agreement, I have affixed my signature to the petition and give it to Morgan to deliver.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned property owners and tenants, strongly oppose the current value assessment. The 2004-05 current value assessment is too high, and we will show strong resistance. There may be a revolt.

"We believe the municipal tax system should reflect the following principles: (1) Ability to pay should be a consideration; (2) property taxes should relate to services 100%; (3) homeowners should not be penalized for improving their properties; (4) dependence on the residential property tax to raise provincial and municipal revenues should be reduced; (5) the assessment system should be stable over long periods of time; the best time is 10 years; (6) assessments should be objective, accurate, consistent, correct, equitable and easily understood—house S.F./class/price; lot S.F./class/price, garage S.F./class/price; and (7) the owner should be authorized to approve the assessment.

"Most of our funding has come from ratepayers' groups and citizens from across the city of Toronto."

I present this petition to you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GREATER TORONTO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LA RÉGIE DES TRANSPORTS DU GRAND TORONTO

Mr. Takhar moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and to repeal the GO Transit Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 104, Loi visant à créer la Régie des transports du grand Toronto et à abroger la Loi de 2001 sur le Réseau GO.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I am pleased to lead the debate on our proposed legislation to create a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, known as GTTA.

First, let me point out again why it is critical to act now to curb traffic congestion in the greater Toronto

area. There are approximately 5.5 million people living in the GTA and Hamilton area. It is no surprise that our highways are already operating at close to capacity and have been for some time, yet it is estimated that in the next 25 years we will see an increase of nearly two million vehicles in the GTA and surrounding areas.

Transport Canada estimates that the cost of congestion in Toronto alone is \$1.6 billion annually. If we don't take further action, by 2021 commute times within the GTA could increase by more than 50%, increasing the costs of congestion by about \$7 billion a year.

I said "if" we don't take further action. Well, our government is taking action. If our legislation is passed, the mandate of the proposed GTTA will be to create a seamless, integrated and coordinated transportation system. This can be achieved under the governance model we have put forward, which brings municipalities, the province and transit agencies together.

Mr. Speaker, I should have said I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

When commuters are travelling, they don't see municipal boundaries. People want to go from one place to another, like from Hamilton to Richmond Hill or from Whitby to Mississauga, quickly, easily and in a convenient way. Our proposed GTTA puts people over politics and would make travelling by train, bus or subway a real and reliable alternative to using a car.

It is equally necessary to improve existing road infrastructure to enable the efficient movement of people and goods on our roads. There must be a balance. The proposed GTTA will support the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe, which will be released soon. The growth plan will encourage the development of dynamic, vibrant communities that are less car-dependent and more supportive of public transit.

The government continues to demonstrate our commitment to reducing gridlock and improving the flow of traffic. We must look at the GTA and the Hamilton area as one economic region.

We were the first to open high-occupancy vehicle lanes on provincial highways. As a result, the number of people who have switched to public transit or carpooling to take advantage of those HOV lanes continues to grow. There are now about 1,000 vehicles an hour on the eastbound Highway 403 HOV lane during the peak period of the morning rush hour, and about 1,100 on the southbound Highway 404 HOV lane. I should say this exceeds our target.

#### 1550

We've delivered on our commitment and are the first government to offer municipalities a stable source of funding they can rely on to improve public transit through our hugely successful provincial gas tax program. As a result of the gas tax program, public transit ridership is up by 3.4% across this province. That is the equivalent of about 18 million fewer car trips every year. By making the largest investment in over a decade, we are getting our infrastructure and public system back on track after years of neglect.



While the population was growing and congestion was increasing, the previous government's decision in 1999 to eliminate all provincial support for public transit systems had a devastating impact. In my view, this was a very short-sighted decision that left municipalities financially responsible, the province years behind, and commuters suffering with long travel times.

The members of the opposition have already attempted to undermine the proposed GTTA model. I would like to take a few moments and reflect on the performance of the previous government's failed attempt, the Greater Toronto Services Board, normally known as the GTSB. In an attempt to be all things to all people, the previous government established a 42-member board for the Greater Toronto Services Board, the GTSB. This board was made up solely of elected members. The board was too broad to make clear decisions and ultimately created a division between the 416 and 905 areas.

Not only was the board's size a problem, but their mandate was not clear. The GTSB, under the former government, included responsibility for water, sewers, transit, roads and highways, social services and housing, economic development and trade, and growth management. Clearly, the previous government had no focus or clear direction on how to tackle congestion. Ultimately, the result was that the GTSB failed to deliver any concrete things.

This government recognized the need for an additional authority whose sole focus is transportation. If passed, our legislation proposes a balanced governance model, a clear agenda and a focused mandate of integrating transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

If passed, the proposed GTTA will have an 11-member board made up of elected and non-elected members from the participating municipalities and the provincial government. With a clear focus on transportation, the proposed model will be a decision-making body. Students, seniors, business people and commuters will also play an active role by forming an advisory group to offer advice to the board during their decision-making process. We recognize the importance of listening to their experiences, issues and suggestions.

The GTTA's mandate is clear. Its focus is creating a seamless, integrated transit system. Our proposed GTTA model will develop a five-year rolling capital plan, a long-term plan, and a five-year investment plan, and will ensure that transportation and investment plans are consistent with the growth plan. The board will report directly to the Minister of Transportation to ensure that transit ridership continues to meet provincial targets.

The record of this government is \$1.2 billion in transit investment this year. We are moving forward to create the GTTA, which will, for the first time, bring a clear agenda of integration and coordination.

This government recognizes the importance of expanding our transit infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of growing communities. We have listened to the concerns of our municipal partners. That is why this government announced \$670 million for York region and

the city of Toronto to expand the subway system, \$95 million for the city of Brampton for the AcceleRide program, and \$90 million to the city of Mississauga for the Mississauga Transitway system, to enable them to move forward with their major transit initiatives. Our proposed GTTA will build on these projects and bring further results.

If passed, this legislation will allow the agency to bring together the province, the regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York, and the cities of Hamilton and Toronto, as well as local transit agencies, to create a seamless, integrated, more convenient transportation network in this region. Commuters will see a difference. Having a single authority coordinating planning and scheduling will mean that people will spend less time waiting for a connecting bus or train.

Our objective also is to make sure that it reduces duplication. Having one agency oversee the GTA fare card system means that people won't have to fumble for change or a different pass every time they cross a municipal boundary. As I said before, when people are travelling from one place to another, they are not looking at municipal boundaries. They just want to get from one place to another, and they want to do it in a quick, reliable and seamless way. They will be able to use a single fare card for seamless travel across the GTA and Hamilton area. We will be piloting this project in Mississauga in 2007, which will basically have a one-fare-card system from Mississauga to Union Station, and we plan to implement it fully in 2010.

Having one agency coordinate transit vehicle purchases means better value for all of us. We want to make sure that our purchasing dollars get the best value, and that's why we are moving in that direction.

It also makes sense for GO Transit to be transferred into the GTTA at an appropriate time. I always said that it should happen at the appropriate time. We should not do what the previous government did: download it one year and upload it another year. In the meantime, it created havoc throughout the transit system. As the province's largest interregional transit provider, GO Transit supports the GTTA's mandate of planning and identifying strategic investments. It also supports our goal of integrating transit and fare systems. The province will continue to provide annual funding for GO Transit's operational and capital requirements, as it always has done, and according to the same formula that we have adopted before.

Getting something right takes time. That's why we spent the time to consult with the municipalities and we spent the time to consult with regions, transit operators and other stakeholders. We consulted with the Canadian Urban Transit Association, the Ontario Community Transportation Association, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade and the Canadian Automobile Association. Because we have taken the time to consult with these municipalities and organizations, we were able to deliver the best possible model for the GTTA.



A fully functional, operational organization such as the GTTA cannot happen overnight. The first thing is to bring everyone to the table. Our proposed legislation does this. We have laid the foundation. We are taking real action to ease congestion and improve transit and transportation in the GTA and Hamilton area.

1600

I also want to say that the governance model that is being proposed in this legislation makes a lot of sense. We will have four representatives from the city of Toronto, one representative each from the regions of Durham, York, Peel and Halton, and we will also have representation from Hamilton on this board, as well as two provincial representatives. That will create a balance that will help us move forward in a very constructive way.

We are also using what we have learned from the experiences in other jurisdictions. Vancouver, for example, began with a small authority, which now works very well integrating transit and transportation over a wide area.

Here is what people are saying about our proposed legislation. The mayor of Burlington, Rob MacIsaac, told the Hamilton Spectator, "Our economy, our environment, and pocketbook need a coordinated approach that will allow people real choices about how to get around, and businesses to deliver their products on time."

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** The next chair.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** The member opposite says that he's the next chair. That's news to me. Maybe he picked it up somewhere in the newspapers.

Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion told the National Post, "The time has come that we in the greater Toronto area recognize that we are one economic unit, that people are living in one municipality and working in another." I happen to agree with Mayor Hazel McCallion. She's absolutely right. We should treat this as one economic region because the prosperity of the whole region depends upon one good transportation system.

Let me quote the York region chair, Bill Fisch. He told the Toronto Star, "This is a very good beginning. It means we'll all be able to work together in a more co-ordinated fashion than we have in the past." Those are his words.

The Toronto Board of Trade issued a statement with the following endorsement from its president, Glen Grunwald: "Premier McGuinty and Minister Takhar deserve major credit for keeping their word on creating a GTTA and providing sensible rules and priorities to get it started."

From Len Crispino, president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce: "This is a smart move by the government." I couldn't have said it better myself. Our proposed GTTA will take a region-wide approach to creating an integrated, seamless and more convenient transportation network including road, rail and public transit services. Our goal is to reduce gridlock by creating seamless travel.

Now is the time for us to move forward. We cannot let traffic congestion eat into Ontario's prosperity, as our quality of life depends on it. We have to keep traffic moving so that our goods get to the market on time and our people get home to dinner and spend quality time with their families.

I want to urge members from all sides of this House to support this legislation. It is important for us because congestion is becoming a real, major problem in this region. So we really need to come up with a seamless, integrated system in this region. The GTTA makes a lot of sense because it will have a smaller board, it will have a focused mandate and it will have a very clear direction that it has to deliver consistent with provincial priorities. So I would like to urge all members of this House to support this legislation. Thank you for giving me the time to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Ottawa-Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** As my colleague the Honourable Minister Takhar has just said, quick, reliable and safe transportation is vital to our economic success and quality of life.

Let me talk more specifically about some of the key elements of this bill. Our transit and transportation problems and solutions are inter-regional in nature, crossing municipal boundaries. GTTA will play a critical role in planning for a seamless, integrated transit network so that people can use public transit to travel easily from Hamilton to Newmarket to Oshawa.

We need to take a region-wide approach to transit and transportation, one that meets the growing number and the growing needs of commuters in this region. This is consistent with the government's overall approach to planning, as outlined in the proposed growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe area. The plan seeks to reduce the burden on our highways by fostering the development of dynamic communities that support effective and efficient public transit.

One of GTTA's first tasks will be to create a long-term, region-wide, multi-modal transportation plan identifying priorities that will make a difference to all the commuters. The GTTA will be a catalyst, working with municipalities to identify key transportation projects. The agency will submit a rolling five-year capital plan, with an investment strategy submitted annually to the province.

We have been developing a framework for the GTTA by consulting with municipalities and other stakeholders for some time now. As a result of those consultations, we are delivering the best possible model for the GTTA. We are laying the foundation for timely and reliable transportation across the region, and I'm convinced that we have it right.

We do not want to create another Greater Toronto Services Board. We all know that the GTSB did not work. Its 42-member board was completely made up of elected officials, which led to political bickering and delays in decision-making. Our proposed GTTA will report to the Minister of Transportation. The authority



will be overseen by a mixed board—meaning both elected and non-elected officials—nominated by the province, municipalities and regions and appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Under our proposal, GTTA will be governed by representatives from Durham, Halton, Peel and York regions, the cities of Hamilton and Toronto and the province. An advisory committee of stakeholders representing users of transit, seniors, students, persons with disabilities and the business community will also be created. A memorandum of understanding will be established between MTO and the proposed GTTA detailing responsibilities, including financial, auditing and reporting requirements and interaction.

Because we consulted with municipalities, our proposal has the support of municipalities, as you heard in Minister Takhar's statement. Here is what Toronto mayor David Miller told reporters: "It's actually a breakthrough to have the appointees be appointees by Toronto." Brampton mayor Susan Fennell said, "The GTA, as a region, is rapidly expanding. Today, more than ever, we need a seamless transportation network to help reduce congestion on our roads." Hamilton mayor Larry Di Ianni said, "It's crucially important for Hamilton to be part of this, and that's why I think our lobbying efforts have paid off. It will allow us to be part of the mix, to direct some dollars and to champion some projects that will be good not only for the whole area but for us." Mississauga Transit director Bill Cunningham says, "The long-awaited GTTA will help eliminate the duplication of services that currently exists between municipalities."

Our government is bringing forward legislation that, if passed, will fulfill another election promise to integrate transportation in the GTA and Hamilton and relieve congestion and gridlock. That will take much more than a quick fix. As Minister Takhar pointed out in introducing this legislation, we need a broader, comprehensive framework. We need to lay the foundation to ensure that the transit and infrastructure are in place to support strategic growth throughout the greater Golden Horseshoe. We need a vision that puts transit in areas where we need future growth to happen. Our economy depends on how quickly and efficiently we can move people and goods through the region. Transit is our first priority.

In short, our bill would improve the quality of life for Ontarians and drive our prosperity. I know all members will support our efforts and support our proposed Greater Toronto Transportation Authority legislation.

1610

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Sterling:** I look forward to this debate and the committee hearings in regard to it.

I think part of the problem is that this minister cannot seem to forget that the former government did a great deal with regard to public transit and other matters, and he spends most of his time in this gratuitous, inane debate about what previous governments did and didn't do, half of which is true.

For instance, he said, "We were the first ones to open HOV lanes." Yes, you were the first ones to open HOV

lanes, but you didn't build the HOV lanes; the former government built the HOV lanes and made the decision to go ahead and do it. It was the former government, Mr. Minister. Out of respect, you should not make those kinds of statements if you expect to be taken seriously in debate. You're talking to a former minister who made the decision.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** They painted the lines.

**Mr. Sterling:** Yes, they painted the lines, basically. The decision was made before, and the construction was planned and committed to by the previous government.

I look forward to adding to the debate as we go forward, but let's remember that this is a very, very small step being put forward by the government. Unfortunately, the minister and the government have overstated their case and therefore deserve a lot of criticism in that regard.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** It's a pleasure to make some comments. I listened closely to the presentation that was made by both members. I'm reminded, in terms of the comments that were made by both members, that what's being proposed in the bill we are debating today actually doesn't match up to what had been proposed in this Legislature by MPP Greg Sorbara. That was done a couple of years ago when he presented a resolution in this House designed to tackle gridlock in the greater Toronto area. In part, he talked about the creation of a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. He made it very clear that the GTTA would have to be given the financial resources and the mandate, in his words, "to repair the damage from years of neglect...." Of course, that was a reference, from his perspective, to the former government; I won't go into that. A similar commitment with respect to resources and clout was made by the Liberals in their 2003 election platform on page 115. In reading what has been proposed, in reading what was promised and in looking again at the resolution that was put forward by Mr. Sorbara, it seems to me that the government legislation that we're dealing with falls short of both the promise and the resolution that was put forward at the time by Mr. Sorbara. So I guess the Liberals, at some point in the debate, are going to have to square that circle or circle that square and tell us why it is that that seems to be the case.

I'm also very concerned about the provision that would allow the GTTA to borrow money for infrastructure improvements under sections 28 and 31. Such financing could really undermine the role of the GTTA to increase ridership, as fares might go up to try to pay for the interest on loans for capital projects rather than using those for operating costs. It also could be used by the Liberals as a mechanism for the province not to assume, or reassume, a role in being a viable funding partner for public transit in the province.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** Thank you for giving me the chance to speak in support of this bill. I believe it's a very important initiative and a very important bill. I want to congratulate the minister, who's always



working to relieve the pressure on the highways, especially in Toronto.

As you know, almost 5.5 million people live in Toronto and the GTA area, so it's very important to create some kind of initiatives and mechanisms to ease the tension and the gridlock around the Toronto area. Many people who want to visit or cross Toronto at the present time are having a hugely tough time. Sometimes it takes them hours, a long, long time. As the minister stated in his introduction, many people want to go to work and come back to have dinner with their family, and they cannot do it at the present time because of the gridlock, because so many cars are being used by commuters. Many people are using the same highways and roads, and there's never been a huge investment in the past to solve that problem.

I want to congratulate the minister for coming out with a strategy to help Ontarians, because many people come to Toronto—not just people who live in Toronto. Many people cross Toronto.

I had the chance to meet with manufacturers in this province, and they told us that it's vitally important to them to solve the highway issue, that commuting issue, because the faster they can go back and forth through Toronto, the more money they make, and they make their products more competitive. That's why I think we can save almost \$1.6 billion annually through this investment and also help many people to come and invest in Ontario, help many people to move their goods through Ontario.

This investment is great. This bill is important for Toronto and it's important for Ontario. I also want to congratulate the minister for his continuous effort to support all the roads and bridges across the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I had another comment I was going to make on the minister's speech until I heard the fact that they're going to save \$1.6 billion with this commission.

**Mr. Ramal:** Yes.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I would love to see the data for how you actually came up with that figure. That's \$1.6 billion, not million, you're talking about, right?

**Mr. Ramal:** Billion.

**Mr. Dunlop:** It's a billion. So you're going to save that by the use of this authority: Is that what you are trying to say? That will be something. It's going to be in effect in September, so we're going to watch very closely the \$1.6 billion you're going to save the citizens of the province of Ontario by implementing this plan.

In the minister's final response, when he gets up to comment, I'd like him to comment on Highway 400 in Simcoe county. That's the part of the province you keep forgetting about. They've got a highway up there too. It's called the 400 highway, and the worst gridlock you could ever imagine is on that. You haven't tried to do an HOV lane on that, and you've done almost nothing with GO Transit. I'd really like to hear what your plans are to move the people in and out of the county of Simcoe, particularly in light of the fact that you've created a greenbelt area, and now we have all this huge pressure of

a leapfrogging effect of development in Simcoe county without any of the services in order. You've created a development that has sped up the development in Simcoe county by 25 years. That's what's happened here: It's 25 years ahead of its normal growth rate. Now there are no services provided by the government, not even any sewer and water main projects announced in the recent COMRIF for the county of Simcoe. Somehow, you think you're going to add 500,000 or 600,000 more people to the county of Simcoe without any of the infrastructure in place for something that you have created.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, you have two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank all the members who participated in the discussion. Let me just start by saying that nobody can dispute the fact that there is congestion on our highways, and nobody disputes the fact that that congestion has gotten worse. That didn't just happen; it happened because the previous government—here is the record. It's all in the numbers. In 1995-96, we were spending in excess of \$660 million on public transit. Come the year 1999-2000—

**Mr. Sterling:** Yes, we gave them tax points.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Do you know how much? Sixty-four million dollars. Then they thought that \$64 million was too much money, so they thought, "Next year, we should go to \$38 million." Thirty-eight million dollars, and they thought that would resolve all the congestion problems in this province. That is their record.

They talk about the HOV lanes. Yes, maybe the ministry planned them at that time. But it's like those plastic cheques that they delivered all over the province when they were giving out money, but they never really gave any money to any of these projects. At the end of the day, we end up delivering to all these projects.

To us, congestion is important. It's not about politics; it's about the economic region and the prosperity of this region. We need to address the issue of congestion, and we feel that one route to do it is through the GTTA. Even though we didn't wait for the GTTA, we actually announced three major projects: one for the subway, one for Mississauga Transitway and one for Brampton transit. We knew it would take time for the GTTA to be up and running, but we needed to address those issues right away.

This is the only government who is really committed to delivering and addressing the issue of congestion in this whole economic region as one unit, which the previous government really didn't do.

1620

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Sterling:** I believe that we have unanimous consent to defer our leadoff when our critic is not here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to defer the leadoff? Agreed.

**Mr. Sterling:** It's a pleasure, actually, to speak on this bill because this kind of proposal and some of the former attempts to deal with some of the coordination of the transportation needs of the greater Toronto area were my



specific responsibility in the year 2002-03. I would not portray our lack of funding to the public transit system as the government continues to try to do, as the member opposite has, because essentially what happened was that in 1999 the Ontario government, the former Conservative government, took up a much greater responsibility for education funding across the province of Ontario. When we took on more responsibility for education funding, this left tax room for the municipalities to make up funding—they had formerly received a direct cheque from the Ontario government—to replace that with moving into that tax room vacated by the government at that time. That's something that the Liberals continue to misinform the public about with regard to what actually happened during that period of time. We picked up more of the tab on education. The municipalities had more money to spend on their public transit systems.

In spite of that, we did step up to the plate with regard to the Sheppard subway. In fact, I had the pleasure of opening that subway. This government put close to \$600 million into that particular project which, of course, was for transit. And I delivered cheques to the city of Ottawa for, I believe, \$13 million one year, and my successor delivered something like \$17 million. We had the millennium funding, where we delivered \$45 million to the city of Ottawa, some for improvement of some of the arterial roads as well as for some improved park-and-go situations. Bus centres at the Centrum mall in Kanata: I think we contributed about \$4 million to that particular project as well. So we were involved very much with the cities with regard to their transportation systems.

We're fortunate in the Ottawa area. The city of Ottawa, because of its very large boundaries, doesn't have the same problems we have here in the greater Toronto area or where the system or the population has grown out and slopped over several other counties or regional areas. Therefore, bringing together all of the municipalities is no longer necessary in the city of Ottawa. We could speak with one voice and the systems can be made with regard to our transportation system in Ottawa, even though I have some reservations about some of the directions the present city council is going in, and of course it's of great debate within the context of the civic elections.

Creating a transportation authority for a large geographical and a large populated area like we're talking about in the GTTA is not an easy matter. Therefore I was surprised, quite frankly, in the last election when the government made this grandiose promise that they were going to create the GTTA, the Greater Toronto Transit Authority, because it sounds good; it sounds really good. You say, "Well, here's one body that's going to be able to take care of all of our needs for transportation."

The former government tried to put together a like mechanism under the Greater Toronto Services Board, which covered the same area and had not only transportation within its portfolio but also other services as well. That particular model failed. It didn't fail because of the number of people on the board, although it was a

large number: 42. It failed because of parochial politics. What happened was, when the board met and was trying to make decisions for the whole, the municipal politicians couldn't leave their parochial interests at home. Consequently, decisions were not made, plans were not made and spending decisions were not made to go in unison, as we would have liked to see. So the board collapsed and the GO Transit authority sort of evolved out of it.

I can remember the head of the Greater Toronto Services Board talking to me and saying, "Mr. Sterling, either give us some real power or dissolve us. There's no sense in us having an organization where people come to talk about issues if we don't have real power." I guess that's my greatest concern with regard to the GTTA, that we're creating this board, again with heavy political interests—and I quote Mr. Grunwald, who is head, I believe, of the Toronto trade association—

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** Board of trade.

**Mr. Sterling:** Toronto Board of Trade; thank you. He has expressed his concerns about the new organization being "far too politicized." I believe those were his words. While he and his organization have been a strong proponent of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority—I'm going to call it GTTA so I won't trip over it again, Mr. Speaker—he has some concerns about this bill in that I believe of the 11, nine will potentially be municipal politicians representing different areas. I suspect that as we go down the road, we will hear again that the GTTA is not moving forward as perhaps people would like it to move forward because of the highly politicized nature of the new GTTA.

The other part of it is this: You create a board, you create a corporation to do certain things, and you want them to do certain things, but basically it's an advisory kind of board. They're not taxing for the money. They have to get that money from somewhere else. So essentially what we're saying is we're going to put people in charge of spending taxpayers' money who are not responsible for taxing or collecting that money. Time and time again, organizations have been formed with this intent, but it has never worked out because there has to be a very direct connection between the pressures of collecting that money and allocating that money and those spending that money, and this just doesn't have it.

As you read through the sections of the act, you get more and more the idea that this is really the GO Transit system under a new name and that the major function of this GTTA board will, in fact, be running the GO Transit system. Because we do away with the GO Transit Act, they make the bylaws with regard to GO Transit and in fact that's their day-to-day function, and the organization's day-to-day function will be running the GO Transit system—a worthwhile and necessary function, but we're already doing that. The only powers that this act has and gives to this new GTTA is (1) they can expropriate land for the purposes of carrying out its objectives and (2) it can borrow money. Nowhere in the act does it say where the money is going to come from to



pay for it except that, as my friend from Nickel Belt has said, their only source of revenue, really, for what they're going to do is to collect fares.

1630

The other matter that I wanted to talk about was this seamless connection with regard to the one-fare system. This is not a new idea; in fact, we were starting down the road to doing this three years ago. I'm surprised that it isn't already done at this stage of the game, because you don't need a piece of legislation to do this—at least not the way this legislation is written, anyway. A private corporation could have been set up, a non-profit corporation probably, and the system could have been started three years ago, as we were about to do in 2003. I don't know what happened, but I think I know what happened: The assistant deputy minister for transportation probably got impatient with this government and left this government and went to be one of the chief bureaucrats in the city of Toronto. He was the assistant deputy minister who was in charge of planning for the Ministry of Transportation. Quite frankly, had he not left, and had people worked with that particular ADM, we would have had about a two-and-a-half-year start ahead of where we are at the present time with regard to this initiative. There was nothing to stop and we were about to enter into agreements with the, I believe, 18 different transportation authorities across the greater Toronto area to have a one-fare system. The biggest block to that was the TTC, which didn't want to join in. So there was a great deal of push and pull between them.

But if you read this act as to what they can do or cannot do, this GTTA cannot impose their will with regard to a one-fare system on anybody. Under section 16, it says clearly that it can operate a local "transportation service within the regional transportation area by agreement with the municipalities." It can do the same, operate a transportation service, which the one-fare system would be, in areas "outside the regional transportation area by agreement with the municipalities to be served by the system or service." So while the minister talks about a one-fare system, he's going to have to get the city of Toronto council to sign on. He's going to have to get all of these different transportation authorities to sign on. Now, you don't need a piece of legislation to get agreement to create a one-fare system. It should have been done two and a half years ago. It should have been done and should have been in place now.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Nine years ago.

**Mr. Sterling:** Well, it should have been done nine years ago, but it was on the plate when we left the government in 2003. This government has languished and done nothing since that time. So we now have a piece of legislation which sort of says the same things that were being said in policy papers three years ago. We could be 60% or 70% of the way down the road. Quite frankly, I would have put more teeth in the act. I would have said that after a certain period of time the authority would have the ability to demand that the transportation authorities become at least part of that very small piece of the

overall pie with regard to providing transportation in the greater Toronto area.

We also heard about these great investments—\$670 million—which the government has put into the subway. Well, they haven't put a cent into the subway. They've given \$670 million to certain trustees, as we understand, for a future subway. That subway is not going to be built for four or five years, because I assume that they would have to go through the environmental process, provided that this government doesn't give them a bypass to the environmental assessment process. You have to go through a significant amount of work before you build a subway. I understand that some of that is on its way, but this subway is not going to be there for a long period of time. In fact, perhaps I'll be the minister opening the subway too, five or six years from now.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Maybe Garfield.

**Mr. Sterling:** Or maybe Garfield Dunlop will be. I hope it's Garfield.

Anyway, the other part of it is that this money was given to transportation not because of a desire by this government to do anything for transportation; it was a desire to avoid a balanced budget this year. That's why we came back earlier, in March. We were supposed to come back here in April, but they wanted to spend this money tout de suite, before the end of the fiscal year, which was at the end of March, so they wrote out these cheques so fast that they didn't even know where the cheques were going. One of the cheques was \$670 million for a subway, to trustees in Toronto. They wrote another \$400 million to the rest of Ontario. They wrote I think \$95 million to Mississauga and \$65 million to Brampton.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** No, it's the other way around.

**Mr. Sterling:** The other way around? Okay, \$95 million to Brampton and \$65 million to Mississauga. We in eastern Ontario, in Ottawa, are really grateful for \$32 million even though we're the second-largest city in all of Ontario. We really got the short end of the stick once again. We got \$33 million out of \$1.4 billion—2% to 3%, even though we're 8% of the population served. You shortchanged us big time and the people of Ottawa know it.

That whole guise of this government being concerned about transportation was really a ruse to get money out the door so that instead of a balanced budget last year, we have a deficit of about \$1.4 billion or something like that so that they can say, going into the election year, "We finally balanced the budget." Of course we're going to tell people the truth, when we get into next year, and that we in fact will have a deficit. We'll be asking the auditor to look very closely at the agreements.

I think I raised in this Legislature as well that they wrote cheques to municipal and county governments. They wrote cheques to two county governments that I know about that don't even have roads and bridges in their responsibility. They wrote a cheque for over \$1 million to the county of Frontenac, and they don't have a bridge or a road to take care of. They're all lower-tier



municipalities. So that county council can decide how and what they want to do with that money. They could spend that million bucks whichever way they want. Hopefully it will go back down to the lower-tier municipalities but there ain't no guarantee, because it's their money, free and clear. They did the same with Hastings county. They were so anxious to get this money out the door that they didn't even know what they were doing. They wrote a cheque to the county of Hastings for \$1.6 million, and they don't have a road or a bridge to take care of. "Here's a cheque for \$1.6 million, county. Please spend it on your roads and bridges." The finance minister said that every cent was going to be spent on roads and bridges, so he was handing out cheques. He wanted to get them out so fast at the end of the year that he didn't even know whom he was writing them to, that they didn't have any roads or bridges to take care of, because they're all taken care of by the lower-tier municipalities.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** Think of what they'll do next year, Norm.

**Mr. Sterling:** I don't know what they'll do next year. It will be quite interesting to see.

The GTTA—let's get back. It's hard to talk about this particular bill, because there's really not a lot in the bill other than the name. The name is good, "GTТА" is a nice name and all the rest of it, but there's really no guts or power or money behind this particular organization. Anyone who participates in an organization like this will be like the former head of the GTSB: He will be coming to us after the next election and saying, "Mr. Sterling, give us guts, give us some money or disband us."

It's an interesting experience and I hope that I'm wrong.

1640

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** Like others who have addressed this issue today, I look at this bill, and the more you look at it, the more you see nothing in it. I see an empty vessel. I see a structure that doesn't have funding. I'll ask the minister when he gets an opportunity to speak today to talk about how exactly this Greater Toronto Transit Authority will fund itself. Will it in fact be able to carry out the plans it is supposed to be putting forward? Will it actually be able to levy money from the municipalities that will be covered by its authority? Will it in fact intercept funds from higher levels of government before they get to those municipalities?

If this organization has no money, it will deliver no effect. It will be a talking shop. As my colleague has just said, we will have people coming back to us in a few years saying, "This structure is of no use, has no purpose and, frankly, we think it should be folded," as long as they put forward what they've put forward today. There is every reason, when you look at the bill, to see why it gets panned in the press, why the Toronto Star in their editorial this morning said that this was not the solution to transit problems in the greater Toronto area because in fact there's no authority, no money and no future.

That is part of the problem, but there's a more fundamental problem, and that's that this government is not addressing the question of sprawl. If you don't address the question of sprawl, and I'll talk about that at greater length, then you can have as many GTTAs as you want. You can call them by a variety of names. They won't move traffic, they won't get people out of their cars, they won't deal with pollution, they won't deal with smog and they won't deal with the crisis in transportation in this area because, in the end, the sprawl will strangle the transit.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Actually, the discussion has been very—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hold on for just a second.

My problem. The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** The discussion has actually been very interesting. The member from Lanark-Carleton said that they gave money to the municipalities. I think the municipalities will say it was the other way around and they will disagree with that. Let me just quote Hazel McCallion and what she wrote to the Mississauga News. She said, "Huge backlogs in transit that the former Harris government created by cutting off the capital funding of buses contributed towards the deficit of the Toronto system." She went on to further say, and I have her letter right here, "I hope that you give me an opportunity to express to the Mississauga News the appreciation of the city of Mississauga that the Liberal government under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty has taken action on trying to help the municipalities by providing a gas tax, and in fact not only capital funding, but they have made it very lenient by allowing us to use it for the operating budgets of transit systems." This is a third party saying that. It's not even me saying it. I don't know what the member is talking about.

What they really did in 1997 and 1999 was that they basically downloaded about 4,900 kilometres of roads to the municipalities, and that's what they gave the money for. Now they're saying that it was for the transit system. Their transit record is that they had \$666 million in 1995-96, when they took over government, and that went down to \$38 million or less than that in four or five years. That is their track record and that's why we have congestion on the roads. Now they're objecting that we're trying to address the issue of congestion. I don't understand this.

We need to move ahead with the GTТА because the GTТА will create a seamless, integrated transit system in this province.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Another photo op.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** It's not about photo ops. That's your—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Simcoe North, come to order. Go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** That is their track record. That is their photo ops; the plastic cheques. That is what they actually specialize in.



What we plan to do is we have put \$400 million for bridges and roads in this province. They downloaded 4,900 kilometres to the provinces.

Also, I should say we gave a \$600-million project to Ottawa—\$600 million—and out of that the provincial contribution was \$200 million. With that, Ottawa is making progress. I'm very proud of the kind of the work that they have done.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I want to compliment my colleague from Lanark on his presentation on Bill 104. I also want to put on the record that I realize that the Minister of Transportation has had three years to struggle with his cabinet to get endorsement and approval, to get this thing forward to the point of legislation.

My major frustration with this legislation is that it's been promised in three budgets. I recognize that there is a pecking order in cabinet and certain ministers have more authority and get more results, but let's hope that we can move through public consultation and through the process of clause-by-clause and get moving on this issue.

I know the minister put on the record supportive comments from my mayor of Burlington, Rob MacIsaac, who I've indicated publicly would make an outstanding nominee. I know he's been on the list for consideration to run the GTTA. I personally would support that. Here is a person with long municipal experience, but he also understands the tension and the dynamic that exists between regional upper-tier municipalities and city lower-tier municipalities. This is one of the big challenges that we have in terms of fair integration and making the GTTA work. I do hope that the government will be able to speak in an articulate, clear way about its vision for the tension between upper-tier and lower-tier. On the record, I think that Rob MacIsaac would make an outstanding nominee.

Minister, you talked about the downloading. Currently your ministry is in negotiations with the region of Halton to download Highway 7. You don't have one penny on the table. You talk a big stick in opposition, but let's see how you perform as minister.

**Ms. Martel:** The debate is heating up a little bit; that's always interesting.

I want to just follow up on a comment that was raised by the member from Lanark—Carleton, and that has to do with money, funding, pecunia, however you want to describe it. The reality is that the government brings to the House today legislation that will make the GTTA responsible for developing regional transit plans to try and increase ridership. But the sustained, viable financing mechanism to go with increasing ridership and to support those plans is nowhere in this bill. Who's going to pay for these plans? Who's going to pay for whatever capital infrastructure changes are going to be required as a result of these plans? What's also interesting is that there is no legislative requirement in the bill that the province or the federal government—it might be hard to do the feds—no requirement in the bill whatsoever that the province is going to approve or fund the projects that the GTTA put

forward. The group can go ahead and lay out great five-year priority plans, but if there's no money, there ain't going to be much of an improvement in transit.

We're not the only ones concerned about this very serious matter of financing. The board of trade president, Glen Grunwald, said the following: "We're concerned by the lack of strong financial tools that will provide sustainable revenue. The authority will need sufficient funds to tackle major projects and create partnerships. The last thing we want to end up with is a great car that doesn't have enough gas in the tank." I think that says it all. And I say to the minister, who's here today, where is the provision for your government to fund the projects? How is this going to be sustainable? Who's going to pay for it? Where is that articulated in the bill?

1650

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Lanark—Carleton, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Sterling:** Let me explain once more what tax points are about. The minister obviously doesn't understand that when one level of government vacates a tax area, like we did in 1999—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Sterling:** Can I speak, Mr. Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** We've had a fair amount across the floor today, but the floor is yours.

**Mr. Sterling:** He says that the mayor doesn't agree with me. Well, the mayor loves to receive cheques. Any mayor loves to receive cheques. She loves to receive tax points, and so we gave tax points. You don't want to recognize that particularly in the 905 area, that was a significant transfer of wealth to the municipalities so they could fund their public transit systems. That was the arrangement. Now there's this claim that there was no funding, and that is patently false.

Notwithstanding that, the idea of the GTTA is not a bad one in terms of trying to get some coordination. My concern, when the board of trade came to me when I was Minister of Transportation, was exactly the questions we're hearing today. I said to them, "Can you put in front of me a structure where there is a responsible relationship between those who are spending the money and those who are collecting the money?" I never received that response. I assume that this government has now made the decision to go ahead with this bill, which is, in effect, a farce.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Tabuns:** As we all know in this Legislature, a properly funded and well-functioning public transportation system is crucial to making the GTA a healthy, prosperous place, and to making sure it works for residents and for industry. We're all familiar with the figure, provided by the Toronto Board of Trade, of \$2 billion as the cost of gridlock in the GTA; the number given today by the government is \$1.6 billion per year. We're talking about very large numbers impacting on residents, on business, on industry, on job creation in this region. So the question of dealing with gridlock is crucial to the future health and prosperity of this area.



Anyone who has tried to move across the GTA by transit knows that it's balkanized, that it's inefficient, that the fundamental problems of transportation in this whole region have to be addressed. In fact, that's the reason we have a bill before us today. People need to get around.

When you talk to people in the 905 region, as I happened to be able to do on Saturday night—I was at the Harry Jerome Awards, and one of the people I was seated with came from Ajax-Pickering. I was saying, "What are the issues in the area you live in?" He said, "The number one issue for the people I talk to is gridlock. They get in their cars, they try to go to work, they try to get across the region. At 20 or 30 kilometres an hour, they inch along, at times stop-and-go on the 401, trying to get to places they have to get to."

In the end, this government—in fact, any government in Ontario that wants to have support in the greater Toronto area—is going to have to come to terms with gridlock. The problem is that what we have before us is an approach that's called a solution but that doesn't deal with the fundamental problems that create gridlock in the first place, and thus is doomed to failure.

This government promised to deliver the GTTA in each of the last three years. Knowing the political consequence, the seriousness of dealing with gridlock, of dealing with this transit issue, I expected that we would see a serious bill, that we would see in the GTTA an institution with the mandate and funding mechanisms that would really start to deal with the problem in a fundamental way and reverse the difficulties that people in this area face. But what we have before us falls very far short of what is needed to actually deal with gridlock and with the transit issue. I think that's going to be a big issue for everyone in this House who represents a riding in the 905 and everyone in this House who cares about keeping the economic heart of Ontario rolling.

Let's start at the beginning. Before we go to the substance of the bill itself, let's talk about traffic congestion and the pollution issues and health issues and economic issues that shape the approach that any government should have to deal with this problem. In the 1990s, we started seeing the resurgence of something called the new urbanism, an approach to new development that reflected the urban form in North America that actually was able to sustainably support transit. One of the foremost proponents of the new urbanism was an American architect, Andrés Duany. Duany made a very interesting video in the mid-'90s about the urban form that he confronted. He opened his video with a slide that he had taken of something called the town centre. I don't know where this town centre was located in North America. It could be a town on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Increasingly, it could be a city in the GTA. It could be in the outskirts of Montreal or New York. But the slide is quite extraordinary. It is two eight-lane highways intersecting with a giant parking lot on each corner. This is a town centre. Duany, quite correctly, quite accurately, said that this town centre is a formula for gridlock. This town centre, as set out, means that you don't have the kind of

critical mass at the centre of a city that allows you to have a rational, sustainable, affordable transit system. That is what we have increasingly in the GTA. We have a system that is so low-density, so sprawling, so irrationally jumbled together, that even a very smart, very well-thought-out, very well-financed and legislatively powerful transit authority will not be able to solve the transit problem.

When we look at sprawl, we have a number of fundamental issues that arise from—I was going to use the words "planning a city"—allowing an urban form to arise that has no rhyme or reason other than the immediate profit of a developer who wants to put up a shopping mall or a subdivision. The reality is that in the very low-density suburbs we have in the GTA, people need to have a car to get around, because in order to go from one spot to the other, there is no transit system yet existing, and probably will not exist in the future, that can actually give people the mobility they need. The urban form they deal with is too jumbled, too spread out. So when you look at two-car ownership numbers in the downtown core of the GTA, which is the inner city of Toronto, more like 50% of people have two cars in their household. When you get to the outer ring of the GTA, you're talking about close to 100%. People have to have a car to get around. The simple reality of millions of cars is that they will overwhelm road systems. The experience in Los Angeles—they built expressway after expressway, decade after decade, and year after year the speed of traffic on those expressways went downward. You can't solve the problem of an irrational and jumbled urban form by simply building more roads and more expressways. If you have an urban form that demands car ownership and use, then there are things that fall out from that. Some of the things that fall out from that are air pollution and climate-change-forming gases.

#### 1700

Air pollution: Cars are responsible for about 40% of the smog-producing pollutants in our atmosphere. You know very well the impact of smog on the GTA and Ontario. We've talked about the \$1.6 billion or \$2 billion that is the cost of gridlock to this regional community. But if you look at the human cost in health, the OMA says that in Ontario there are about 1,800 deaths a year from air pollution. Cars aren't all of it, but they're a big chunk of it. If you look at the cost of that to the Ontario economy, the OMA's calculation is about \$1 billion a year: a very significant number and a very significant human impact.

If you look at climate change—a problem increasingly recognized around the world, a problem that people have to deal with—we in the GTA are starting to see some of those impacts, not just in heat waves but in the storms that climate scientists predicted would hit more frequently and with far greater force. The Toronto Star in the last few weeks had articles about sinkholes that have opened up on different roadways, causing huge traffic problems because the scope of the storms that dumped rain on the GTA was far greater than the 100-year-old



storm design guidelines that engineers were used to using. So they sweep out culverts; they cause problems with the flow of water that undermines roads. We will see more and more of that. We will see far higher infrastructure costs in the future from the practices we have today.

Here's an example: In the mid-'90s, New York City did a study about the impact of climate change called "The Baked Apple?" Because of the rise in sea level in this century, New York City will find that its sewer outflows no longer flow into the sea but in fact the sea will flow into its sewer system. For New York City, there will be a massive cost to redo its sewer system. Here in Toronto, we won't have to deal with a rising sea level. What we will have to deal with is dropping levels in Lake Ontario. We and our children will face real costs for not taking action on climate change.

When we have gridlock, when we have urban sprawl, when we have a car-dependent regional community, we enhance, we accelerate the damage to our air and to our climate that these factors bring about.

When we look at the sprawl in this area, which will ultimately make the GTTA irrelevant, we should look at the record of this McGuinty government in actually addressing sprawl. Looking at the greenbelt legislation, about 143,000 hectares of developable land have been left open for "future development." That's within the greenbelt plan, an area equivalent to about 75% of all the lands currently developed in the GTA. So it's roughly allowing almost a doubling of the size of the GTA at densities so low that car use will be necessary for most people to get around. Following the patterns we have seen today, it will be at or lower than the density of Los Angeles, meaning that we will continue to have car-driven transportation and an undermining of the potential for any transit authority to actually provide the service that people need to get out of their cars.

If you look at those numbers from another angle, the Neptis Foundation, which has done a lot of work for environmental groups looking at sprawl in the greater Toronto area, calculated that there was enough land there for 60 to 70 years' worth of growth at current density levels; for us, a disaster, because if you look at the \$2-billion or \$1.6-billion figure that's already talked about for the cost of gridlock, think about the cost in a number of decades. By 2031, it's been projected that the average commute time for people living in the GTA will be 300% longer than it is now. Listen to the number that was provided by the McGuinty government earlier in this debate: 2021, looking at a gridlock bill, a transportation slow-down bill of around \$7 billion. These are huge burdens on the economy, not to talk about the questions related to air pollution, not to talk about the questions related to climate change, not to talk about the questions related to the quality of life; simply the cost to business of slow-down in delivery. As long as the government sticks with its pro-sprawl, pro-road policies, this bill before us today will be irrelevant.

One of the measures that this government has taken in the last while is something called the Places to Grow Act

and their proposed growth plan. It calls for increased urban density, reduced infrastructure costs, decreased sprawl, less transportation-based pollution, and increased protection for environmentally significant lands and prime agricultural farmland. It is an act, frankly, that is largely hollow. When you go to comments by Environmental Defence Canada that were made at the time that the bill was introduced, first of all, they noted that the time frame that municipalities would have to make their plans consistent with this Places to Grow Act—I have to say that I don't like these Orwellian titles. Nonetheless, the Places to Grow Act said that municipalities would have five years to bring their plans into conformity with this act. In fact, in the proposed growth plan they talk about 10 years to come into conformity. The reality is that if you don't act very quickly to break the momentum of this sprawl, if you don't act very quickly to change the direction, you are not going to be able to change it later. Five years, 10 years—completely unreasonable. But in fact that's where the government is going, and because the government is going there, I'm quite comfortable in saying that this Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act will be of no consequence. It will not make a difference, in the end, to what we have to do in this House.

Secondly, Environmental Defence noted comments from Mr. Bedford, former chief planner with the city of Toronto, who said that a 40% target for restraining the growth of the area was not enough, that if this bill did not put in place far tighter constraints on sprawl, we would simply have all the problems we've had to date, we would have problems that would continue to undermine the quality of life here, continue to undermine the quality of the air we breathe, continue to undermine the future for ourselves and for our children. When you have an act before you that sits on a foundation of sand already, you can be quite assured that it will not stand the test of time. It may not even stand the test of this particular government's mandate.

1710

At present, the greenbelt excludes south Simcoe. That's a region that is already experiencing significant pressure from urban sprawl. My colleague here has introduced a private member's bill about south Simcoe. As you know, proposed developments for south Simcoe include a proposal for construction of an entire city. That's 100,000 people, massive by any scale, leapfrogging over the greenbelt to the other side. These developments, 100,000 people, are being proposed on land not designated as urban residential in any of the county of Simcoe's official plans.

South Simcoe has quickly become the principal site where development has leapfrogged over the greenbelt, and it's fuelling increasing sprawl and furthering highway dependence. Is the government taking on this private member's bill? Is this government pressing the issue that the member from that area has put forward? I've seen no evidence of it. What we continue to get is business as usual, with sprawl and empty acts that purport to deal



with the transit problem. That's what we have: sprawl and empty, hollow promises.

The highway dependence that the whole McGuinty-proposed growth plan is based on is seen most clearly in Highway 404. The extension of Highway 404 is termed simply "a highway to sprawl" when you talk to environmental groups. When you talk to or you listen to the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, the Pembina Institute and Ontario Nature, they all have the same review: Highway 404 just means more sprawl every day.

What we have, and I've seen this with the Clean Water Act and other things that come forward in this House, is a bill that's put forward to deal with a problem, however weakly or strongly that bill may in fact be, and on the other hand concrete action on the ground or a mission of action on the ground by this government that undermines and makes useless the bill that has come forward for discussion. This is an ongoing and profound problem with the McGuinty government and one that we in this House are going to have to address, and unfortunately it won't be this government that addresses it.

These events of allowing sprawl to continue, of extending the highway system to fuel sprawl, connect in some way to the bill before us. How they connect is not clear to me, how the McGuinty government sees this as working I don't know, but I do know this: When we finish debating this bill, when this bill, if it ever does go forward, is adopted by the House, it's not going to do what it has to do. It's not going to do what the bill is supposed to do in its stated purpose.

So going on: Instead of implementing the seamless, integrated ticket system between the various GTA transportation authorities within 18 months of the GTTA coming into existence that was promised by the McGuinty Liberals in their 2003 election platform, we know it will be years before an integrated ticket system comes into place, before it's up and running. This is a bill that will put in place an empty vessel. It will be void of funding mechanisms, and it has a mandate that appears to be largely advisory.

When the minister was asked by reporters, "How is it that the GTTA will resolve the priorities among the different transit systems? What authority will they have? How will they actually compel co-operation where compulsion is required? How will they actually make sure that what's needed for this area actually comes to be?" the minister's answer was short and straightforward. He said that the GTTA would use its powers of persuasion. That is an admission that this authority, so-called, will simply be a talking shop and will have no consequence for transportation or gridlock in this area.

My colleague has quoted Glen Grunwald from the Toronto Board of Trade, who said, "We're concerned by the lack of strong financial tools that will provide sustainable revenue." I'm going to quote again what he had to say. He went on to state, "The authority will need sufficient funds to tackle major projects and create partnerships. The last thing we want is a great car that

doesn't have enough gas in the tank." Well, I think Mr. Grunwald needs to speak up a bit more loudly at this point. This car doesn't have gas in its tank. This car is an electric car; it's not plugged into the grid. It is an empty shell, and until the larger question of sprawl is dealt with, it will continue to be an empty shell; until the question of funding and real authority is dealt with, it will continue to be an empty shell.

There is no legislative requirement that the province or federal government approve or fund the projects that the GTTA recommends. And I'm sure that you are, as I have been, very familiar with reports—beautiful reports, wonderfully researched, lovingly illustrated—that are passed out to legislators and city councillors in this province and across this country—wonderful reports that simply sit on the shelf. I have no doubt that this GTTA will hire very capable transportation planners. Those planners will make plans. They'll do the research. They'll do polling. They'll take a look at maps. They'll talk to experts across North America. They'll probably talk to experts in Europe and Asia. But what they bring forward when there is no money will simply sit on the shelf. So what we'll see, every day, every week, every month, are longer delays on the roads, shorter and shorter times that people will spend at home at the end of the workday, longer and longer times to get things delivered in the GTA so that businesses can operate, so that people can be employed.

If the government is serious, if the government is actually serious about transit, then the government has to make provisions to provide funds to the GTTA. It has to, in its budget—it should in its legislation—make it clear where the funds are going to come from, how they'll be disbursed, what the spending priorities are for this government. I don't expect to see that. Prior to 1995, the province funded 50% of the TTC's operating funds and 75% of its capital costs. It wasn't just the NDP government; it would have been the Liberal government; it would have been the Tory government. Prior to 1995, there was a funding formula in place that allowed public transit in the city of Toronto—Metro Toronto at the time—to function the way it needed to. I'm not saying it was perfect, but frankly a far better transit situation than we face now. GO Transit: The "GO" is supposed to stand for "government of Ontario." It refers to Queen's Park's funding role in keeping that transit running.

The reality is that the Conservatives downloaded the costs of the TTC and GO Transit to municipalities that were already strapped for cash, municipalities that were already facing difficulties in making ends meet. I was a city councillor in Toronto in the 1990s. We were constantly engaged in rounds of cost cutting because we were constantly facing income crunches. Then in 1997, just to make sure that the municipalities really were able to deliver the services they had to deliver, they had a whole host of costs downloaded on to them. The McGuinty Liberals came to power saying that they would deal with this download, that they would deal with this long-term, profound problem that municipalities face, not just in the GTA but across Ontario. But that situation has



not in fact been rectified. The GTA's two major public transit systems are starved for operating funds and they're starved for infrastructure funds.

1720

GTA municipalities from the west through to the east have said already that they're totally frustrated with the fact that they're now responsible for what should be the government of Ontario transit infrastructure—the GO Transit system. They're stuck with the cost, they don't have the resources to build it, and this legislation, this rewrite of the GO Transit legislation, does nothing to change this—nothing at all. So again I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to those who are in other places listening to this: The greater Toronto transit authority legislation will not deliver what's needed to deal with gridlock, to deal with transit problems in this region.

Recently, the GO Transit board passed a \$1.7-billion, 10-year expansion budget. That budget sends a very strong message to the McGuinty government. They're expecting the provincial government to provide the GO Transit system with the necessary funds to implement this 10-year plan. The GTA municipalities are already on the hook. They're on the hook for \$98 million to fund infrastructure work for GO Transit in 2006-07. But the GTA municipalities, in whose name this legislation is being put forward, are fed up—completely fed up—with shouldering a transportation service that is rightfully the responsibility of the province.

Instead of resuming the full funding for GO, which frankly would probably tremendously help transit in this region, the government is warning the municipalities that they risk losing gas tax money if they refuse to pay for GO Transit. So I ask myself a question: If in fact the municipalities don't get the funding to maintain their own regional transit systems, what is the GTTA supposed to coordinate? A system of balkanized transit systems that, on their own, are breaking down from lack of cash. In the end, you can put forward all the legislation you want. If you don't put the money along with it, the legislation is largely irrelevant. If you don't deal with the sprawl issue, even if you put the money in, the legislation will be largely irrelevant.

The GTTA is supposed to be able to borrow money to pay for infrastructure improvements. That's sections 28 and 31 of the act. If that money is taken, if revenue from fares is diverted to pay for the loans needed to finance that infrastructure instead of getting the money from the province to finance the infrastructure, we further reduce the operating funds that we need to make sure that this region has the transit it needs. Furthermore, if the GTTA doesn't have a revenue mechanism identified in legislation that allows it to pay back the place where the money is going to come from for those loans, then you have to ask how on earth it's expected that they will actually be able to borrow money from anyone, because they won't be able to say, when they go into a bank or a financing facility, "Yup, lend us \$10 billion; lend us \$20 billion. We don't have any source of revenue, but we have fabulous legislation on the books." How credible is

that? In my opinion, it's totally not credible. Consistent with the act as a whole, it's not credible legislation, not credible premises on which it's based. For public transit to thrive, for the GTTA to successfully move people out of their cars and onto buses and trains, the provincial government in the legislation has to make arrangements for the GTTA to receive ongoing, sustained funding to cover operating and new capital costs. We're not seeing any evidence of that in the legislation before us and, unfortunately, I don't expect to see any evidence of that.

Let's compare this with the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority. Look at the legislation that they have, look at what it's produced, and look at what exists in other provinces. Vancouver faces similar gridlock problems. You might even say, in the opinion of some people, that it faces more profound gridlock problems. They have profound air quality problems. In 1999, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority was created to help deal with the growing problem of gridlock and disparate transit authorities working at cross-purposes in many instances. Like the GTA, over the past decade, commute times in the Vancouver area had shot up by 36%, and anyone who's tried to get through Vancouver at rush hour knows that that figure is probably very generous. It is one slow and tortured move.

How does the McGuinty Liberal legislation compare with the greater Vancouver transit authority legislation? The reality is, it doesn't compare very well at all. Unlike the GTTA, the greater Vancouver transit authority funds itself through fares, through property taxes, through a tax on parking spaces, through a generous portion of provincial gas taxes, with no strings attached, and now a share of the federal gas tax as well. Last year, the greater Vancouver transit authority began taxing free parking spaces through a levy on the owners of malls, plazas and industrial parks.

The reality is, who benefits from a reduction in gridlock? Who benefits from the investment we make in transit? Certainly all of us. But those who are caught in gridlock now, inching along on the QEW, the 401, the 427, they use those parking lots, and their contribution to the cost of dealing with transit makes life better for them very directly. A reminder again: In the greater Toronto area, we're looking at between \$1.6 billion and \$2 billion a year as the cost of gridlock, and the government figure used earlier today was that in 2021, that cost could be up around \$7 billion to \$8 billion a year.

If we're going to cut that huge operating burden on the economy in the greater Toronto area, we have to find funding for transit authorities, and the greater Vancouver transit authority has been given the tools to do that. The combination of these measures that I outlined gives it annual revenues in excess of \$830 million. It's presently undertaking a \$1.9-billion expansion of Vancouver's SkyTrain for the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympics. The greater Vancouver transit authority lays out policy and direction for buses, light rail, trolleys, commuter rail and ferry services that provide service in Vancouver and in the greater Vancouver area. Most importantly, it has the



mechanisms to fund them, which is a crucial central deficit in the bill before us, a bill that's a watchdog with no teeth whatsoever.

There's a song in the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, a hobo song, dreaming of a paradise where the guard dogs have rubber teeth. Well, this is a transit authority with rubber teeth: It will not bite into the problem before us. It is a Greater Toronto Transit Authority that will sit as a bill somewhere, that may well be populated by some planners and people sitting on a board, but it will not deal with the problem that members around this House are dealing with.

1730

The GTTA misses the crucial element of funding and at present, as I've just said, it's largely a symbolic measure. It recognizes the importance of integrated transit planning and the GTTA, but it's missing the key pieces of the puzzle. Without those key pieces, integration will not become a reality. We see big expansion in this region in the years to come. We know that unless these problems are dealt with, we won't be able to come to grips with them.

I've had an opportunity to look at cities in other jurisdictions in other parts of the world: Cordoba in Spain and Amsterdam in Holland, cities interestingly very different. Cordoba is a town in which the city ends and rural areas and farmland begin, a far more rational plan because in fact it is easy to walk through that city. It is easy to walk to the edge of the city and out into rural areas. We can't do that here. We're in an urban form where it takes many hours to actually get to rural areas, particularly at rush hour, particularly on Friday on a long weekend at rush hour. We have, at this point, abandoned the compact city. What I hope is that we don't abandon the potential to have a somewhat more compact city in the years to come.

The suburbs we deal with have been a relatively new phenomenon. Until—what?—the 1940s or early 1950s, most cities in North America were serviced primarily by transit. If you look at the old city of Toronto, it had an urban form that was dense enough to support entirely through the fare box the Toronto Transit Commission, a commission that didn't need to be subsidized by government. Then starting in the 1950s, the United States being the foremost proponent or experimenter or developer, we started getting car-driven suburbs. Here in Toronto, we started seeing that expansion first within the boundaries of the old Metro Toronto and, as transit tried to follow those boundaries out, it became less and less economically viable on its own, requiring more and more government subsidies.

It's interesting, if you look back to the turn of the century to the 1920s, you had developers who pushed for what were called streetcar suburbs—Long Branch, Mimico—suburbs that were developed because transit systems were built out to them, not suburbs that were built wherever a patch of land could be secured, then requiring governments to build an infrastructure that followed.

Here in North America, starting in the 1950s with this growth of car-dependent suburbs, we saw ourselves being drawn inexorably into an urban form that was extraordinarily expensive to support, extraordinarily difficult to get around. Now we have the old city of Metro Toronto that is somewhat sustainable, where you can still run a transit system with a moderate subsidy now going out into the outer GTA, where the cost of subsidizing that transit system will be huge. We will face large costs both in terms of subsidizing that transit system, and in dealing with the health costs of that sprawl itself.

When we think through these costs—I guess the government must have thought through these costs, which is why it decided to bring forward a bill that had no money attached to it. That allows you to actually say you're doing something without having any impact on your budget at all. I can see why it would be attractive. I can see why the Minister of Finance would say to the Minister of Transportation, "Well, I know you've got a political problem here. I know you are getting pressure from people in the 905. I know that we have to look like we're doing something. Bring forward a bill. I'm sorry to say we don't have the money for this, but if you bring forward the bill, it will take a while for it to be debated. Maybe it will be—I don't know—December 2007 before it's brought forward, so we're safe until October 2007. Don't worry about it. Go ahead." So you see this sleight of hand constantly in play to deal with what is a profound problem for the people of this area.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about the local at some length. I want to talk about the impact of not dealing with sprawl in terms of its climate change effects. I mentioned that earlier in my speech. As you and many others in this Legislature will know, climate change poses an increasingly profound problem to people in this society locally and people in human society globally. We've seen fluctuations in world temperature over the last few centuries that have increasingly gone in one overriding direction, and that's consistently upward. Governments have tried to come to grips with that problem. Governments have tried to come to grips with it in the Earth Summit in the early 1990s. At that point, the United Nations, in concert with countries all over the world, set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to look at the realities: Are we dealing with a problem that arises naturally from fluctuations in the earth's climate that have nothing to do with humankind, or is this a problem that is driven by human activity?

Their first report indicated a balance of probabilities leading to human activity being the cause. But increasingly, as the IPCC has gone along, it has identified human activity as the cause, and that has tremendous consequences for us on two sides: one, that in fact climate change can profoundly alter the basis upon which our society is organized; and two, because it's man-made rather than natural, it gives us the opportunity to exercise will, to have the impact that we as humans intelligently could have if we decide to take this problem on.



Many people, when they think about climate change, want to have a sense of what it will look like. What does a hotter world look like? One example that people can look at is North America in the mid-1930s, when world temperatures spiked. Many of us remember from textbooks and from movies, some of us through living through it, what the 1930s were like: the dust bowl, the destruction of agriculture on the prairies, not just in Canada but in the United States; heat waves—the very famous heat wave in the late 1930s that forced people out of their homes throughout Toronto. People were sleeping on roofs; they were sleeping on the beaches. In New York City, people went and slept out on the beach on Coney Island. Hundreds died from the heat. There was a huge impact at the time, tremendously reminiscent of what happened in Europe in 2003. The heat wave that rolled through Europe led to the deaths of 30,000 people in France. It led to a reduction in crop productivity, a 30% reduction in crop productivity in southern Europe in 2003.

When you look at the projections that the IPCC has developed for world food production, they give one concern. When you look at an increase in world temperature of between about 1.6 and 5.9 degrees Centigrade, you realize that we are looking at very big shifts in world temperature. One of the things you find in that report is that world rice production declines about 10% for every one degree increase in world temperature. Let's say you get a three- or four-degree increase in world temperature. That's a 30% or 40% decline in world rice production. That is of profound consequence to the stability of many societies on this globe.

1740

In the late 1990s, the government of Canada did a study called the Canada Country Study, asking, what would actually happen to Canada in a greenhouse world, using the low end of the IPCC projections? It was very interesting because, again, just as in the 1930s, you would see a drying out of the interior of North America, an increase in precipitation on the coasts and greater incidents of very heavy rainfall events because you've got hotter air able to hold more moisture and, when it rains, more is able to come out.

For the prairies, one report in that Canada Country Study cited that there was a reduction of up to 30% in agricultural productivity. The prairies are one of the bread baskets of the world. We export to the Middle East, to Europe and to Asia. What we produce matters, and seeing a sharp reduction in our agricultural productivity matters. Here, the production of food in southern Ontario wouldn't be that bad. There would be some assistance in having longer warm spells and a longer time without frost, but a greater need for irrigation. Irrigation is not cheap. It would impose large costs on farmers today, who don't have to have the infrastructure for irrigation.

We start seeing very substantial costs to our society if we don't get a handle on climate change. We see it in terms of agriculture, but we also see it in terms of forest fires. The Canadian Forest Service is predicting a 50%

increase in forest fires in Canada if climate change goes on at the rate that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts. I was in Quebec a number of years ago when they had the massive forest fires in the north. In Montreal, you could smell the smoke; you could see the smoke coming down from the north. People in Washington, DC, could smell the smoke from those burning forests. In British Columbia right now, the pine beetle used to be killed by very cold winters. It's munching its way through thousands of hectares of forest. An area about the size of England has been destroyed, open to massive fires, open to the destruction of an industry and the destruction of a way of life.

We as a society have to come to grips with climate change. Part of that process is coming to grips with the generation of electricity. We have to phase out coal. We have to limit the burning of any other fossil fuel. We have to deal with gridlock and transit. We have to have a transportation system that's environmentally sustainable, and that means one that's based primarily on public transit rather than one based primarily on private cars. That's why, when we have this legislation before us, we have to ask ourselves, how seriously will it address the problem? Unfortunately, it can't. I said at the beginning of my speech that it can't because it's built on a foundation of sand, because this government is not taking action on sprawl and will not take action on sprawl. In fact, this government is taking steps—I'll cite Highway 404—to accelerate sprawl. This government is not taking private members' bills seriously, ones that address sprawl in the Lake Simcoe area.

If you don't deal with those problems, you can't say later, "Yes, I really cared about it. I put forward a bill that had no funding and no authority." No; you're wasting everybody's time. You're saying that in fact you're just putting forward bills because you want to be able to say to your constituents and your voters, "Yes, I cared about it; yes, I was going to do something about it."

In 2003, the McGuinty government—the McGuinty Liberals at the time—made an important observation about their proposed Greater Toronto Transit Authority. They stated, "The new GTTA will be given the clout and resources to tackle gridlock and ensure free movement of people and goods in a rapidly growing region." I have to say, I can't argue with that. It makes sense to me. Good idea. In order to address that serious issue of gridlock and underfunding of transit authorities in the GTA, we're going to continually call on this government to answer the fundamental question: Where's the money?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I would like to make some positive comments. Contrary to my friend on the other side from Toronto—Danforth, I happen to believe that the GTTA is a major achievement for the people of the greater Toronto area, and certainly for the minister, Harinder Takhar, who did recommend it.

There is no question that we have a major public transportation problem, and for a simple reason; that is, when the Conservatives were in power they chose to cut



every subsidy whatsoever for public transportation, at least for a couple of years. Of course we have to do what was lost when those people were in power, and at the same time we must also invest more money to address the additional needs that have been created because of the expansion of the greater Toronto area.

Our area is over 5.5 million people, and every year it will be going up about a couple of hundred thousand people between Toronto and the 905 area and, of course, Hamilton, which is affected by the GTTA. There's no question that unless we make major investments—we're talking about billions of dollars here, not millions of dollars—for many years to come, we will have major economic liabilities to deal with.

For instance, a study that was done not too long ago indicated that about \$2 billion in economic benefits were lost every single year in the Toronto area only because we were all jammed, we were all blocked, and we couldn't move within Toronto as we should.

Of course, if that trend continues, by 2021 that \$2 billion or whatever could become about \$7 billion a year. The only solution is by having a GTTA where all the municipalities will look at their long-term needs and plan in that manner, not on municipal boundaries where we react instead of planning. The GTTA is the solution.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** If I may, I'd like to present something of a regional perspective with respect to the GTTA. During the 2003 provincial campaign, the Liberal Party made the commitment to create the GTTA and said, "We will bring a region-wide approach to identifying and meeting GTA transit needs by creating the GTTA. The new GTTA will be given the clout and resources to tackle gridlock and ensure free movement of people and goods in a rapidly growing region."

The answer with the legislation that has been proposed is a completely toothless piece of legislation that has no money, no power and no ability to do anything, especially with respect to Durham region, where the budget gave us absolutely no money to address the transit needs of our region or any money to address the really serious problem with gridlock that we're experiencing in Durham. There was money given to the western part of the city, to the city itself and to the northern part, but not a cent was allocated to Durham.

That's totally unacceptable. It's one of the fastest-growing regions in Ontario. We have the same problems that everybody else does with gridlock, especially more so, which is causing, as the honourable member from Danforth has mentioned, serious problems with pollution, with people being stuck on the highways for two hours every day trying to get home, not to mention the quality-of-life issues that it presents and the problems of even getting businesses to locate there when they can't move their goods and services across the region.

My question to this government is: What's the point of creating the GTTA if you're not prepared to put the resources into it to make it work?

**Ms. Martel:** I'd like to congratulate my colleague from Toronto-Danforth on the presentation this after-

noon on the focus with respect to his concern about urban sprawl and the focus on the lack of power that is represented by the GTTA in this bill.

The Liberals, during the last election, promised that the GTTA would be given (a) clout, and (b) resources. The reality is, we have a bill before us, Bill 104, that provides us with neither. No one should think that this is going to work or work properly given the absence of both of these things.

First of all, with respect to clout, part of the failure in the past of the Greater Toronto Services Board was that it had no power to implement its mandate. The reality is that a similar thing is happening here with this government with this new board that it proposes to establish: no clout, no power to implement the plans that it brings forward.

**1750**

Secondly, as importantly—perhaps more importantly—resources: financial resources, the money that's going to be necessary to implement the plans that the government is asking the GTTA to develop. There's nothing in the legislation that commits this government to funding these plans—nothing, zero, no provision whatsoever, no clause whatsoever that would make it incumbent upon this government to actually fund the work that they're calling on this authority to do. And there is no provision whatsoever that would say that there might be some negotiations with the federal government as well so that both the province and the feds would be in a position to support the plans that come forward.

What you've got here is a shell. They have a good idea. There's no doubt that we need coordination with respect to transportation. The reality is, unless the GTTA has both the clout and the money, there won't be any positive change coming out of this at all.

**Mr. McNeely:** It's just surprising that we should get the comments from the third party that we've been getting on this. They should be very supportive of this excellent legislation that is needed in the greater Toronto area and is going into place. The GTTA supports the greenbelt and Places to Grow legislation, because Places to Grow supports vibrant and dynamic communities with less car dependence and more public transit.

They're saying, "There's no money." How much money do you think is good money to start off? It's \$670 million for the TTC and York for subway expansion, \$95 million for Brampton, \$65 million for Mississauga. It would appear that the Durham regional chair, Roger Anderson, is quite happy with those investments that are being made and with the legislation: "I look forward to working with the minister as the legislation goes through the House. The coordination of transit systems across the regions and cities is an important part of smart growth." So Durham's regional chair, Roger Anderson, has it right. I think all of the politicians that we've heard about have it right. They're on board, and I think it's time the third party got on board.

I can understand the official opposition not being on board for public transit. They've never been on board.



Actual transit ridership declined in the years that they were looking after public transit. We built \$600 million worth of bus Transitway in Ottawa with that 75% funding. They took all that funding out.

So I think we have to look at what the third party is saying. I think this is what they want. This is what the Liberal government wants. This is what's good for Toronto. We have the politicians on board. We're going in the right direction. One thing I just want to end with is, if you have been in gridlock today, thank a Tory.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Toronto—Danforth has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Tabuns:** The member from Ottawa—Orléans speaks well and his sentiments head in the right direction. My problem, as I thought I made clear in rambling on for as long as I did, is that I don't see either the funding mechanism within the authority, or the authority within the authority, to deliver the goods, on top of the fact that this is a government that has made very sure that the ability for sprawl to continue in the greater Toronto area is fundamentally protected. So until I hear from the government how they're going to restore transit funding to the municipalities in the GTA that don't have the

resources to adequately fund that transit, until I see how this transit authority is going to actually fund itself over the long term and provide the necessary infrastructure to allow the different municipalities to deliver what they have to deliver on a coordinated basis, I find it very difficult to believe that this legislation before us is anything but hollow. I don't question the sincerity of the member. I just don't see the reality in the bill.

My colleague on the other side of the House spoke as well about the wonders of the bill but does not address these questions: Where in the bill is funding set up? Where is it protected? Where is it guaranteed that funding will continue there? Where's the mechanism? Without that, without a structure to actually make the money flow, then this bill in the end can be nothing but a very pleasant, very interesting construct with no impact.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are at least three excellent timepieces in the Legislature, but I'm going to use the one that only I can see and say that it being near 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*















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<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b>	Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b>	Eglinton–Lawrence	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b>	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Correctional Services) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Services correctionnels)
<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b>	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice-Président, Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)</b>	Sarnia–Lambton	Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b>	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Municipal Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Affaires municipales)
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b>	Windsor–St. Clair	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Ajax	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Promotion de la santé
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Erie–Lincoln	
Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Burlington	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale–High Park	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Énergie
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Marsales, Judy (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade (Small Business) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce (Petites entreprises)
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and minister responsible for women's issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjointe parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture and minister responsible for francophone affairs / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture et ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / York-Nord	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and minister responsible for aboriginal affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services (Disabilities) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (Personnes handicapées)
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b>	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Affaires rurales)
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph–Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government Services / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Housing) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Logement)
Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George</b> (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Lanark–Carleton	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S.</b> (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
<b>Tascona, Joseph N.</b> (PC)	Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tory, John (PC)	Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Agriculture and Food) / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Agriculture et Alimentation)
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim</b> (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Deputy opposition House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Tony C. (L)	Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général



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Kuldip Kular, Norm Miller, Richard Patten,  
Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,  
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne  
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These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

# CONTENTS

Monday 1 May 2006

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Harry Jerome Awards</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	3399
<b>Class size</b>	
Mr. Ramal .....	3399
<b>Physician Appreciation Week</b>	
Mr. Jackson .....	3399
<b>Asian Heritage Month</b>	
Mr. Wong .....	3399
<b>Education Week</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	3400
<b>Nurses</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	3400
<b>Defibrillation equipment</b>	
Mr. Crozier .....	3400
<b>Darfur genocide</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht .....	3401
<b>John Kenneth Galbraith</b>	
Mr. Brownell .....	3401

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton Act, 2006, Bill Pr25, Mr. Levac</b>	
Agreed to .....	3401

## MOTIONS

<b>Committee membership</b>	
Mr. Bradley .....	3401
Agreed to .....	3401
<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Bradley .....	3401
Agreed to .....	3402

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Home care</b>	
Mr. Smitherman .....	3402
Mr. Jackson .....	3405
Ms. Martel .....	3406
<b>Softwood lumber</b>	
Mr. Ramsay .....	3403
Mr. Miller .....	3405
Mr. Bisson .....	3406
<b>Workplace safety</b>	
Mr. Peters .....	3404
<b>Native land dispute</b>	
Mr. Ramsay .....	3404
Mr. Miller .....	3405
Mr. Hampton .....	3406

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Health premiums</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	3407
Mr. Smitherman .....	3407

## Health care

Mrs. Witmer .....	3408
Mr. Smitherman .....	3408

## Tenant protection

Mr. Hampton .....	3408
Mr. Gerretsen .....	3409

## Softwood lumber

Mr. Hampton .....	3409
Mr. Ramsay .....	3409

## Nurses

Mrs. Witmer .....	3410
Mr. Smitherman .....	3410

## Nuclear energy

Mr. Hampton .....	3411
Mrs. Cansfield .....	3411

## Youth services

Mr. Qaadri .....	3411
Mrs. Chambers .....	3411

## Energy rates

Mr. Yakabuski .....	3412
Mrs. Cansfield .....	3412

## Child care

Ms. Horwath .....	3413
Mrs. Chambers .....	3413

## Langue et culture françaises

Mr. Patten .....	3413
Mrs. Meilleur .....	3413

## Regional centres for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Sterling .....	3414
Mrs. Meilleur .....	3414

## Waste diversion

Mr. Tabuns .....	3414
Ms. Broten .....	3414

## Hospital funding

Mr. Oraziatti .....	3415
Mr. Caplan .....	3415

## Agriculture programs

Mr. Wilson .....	3416
Mrs. Dombrowsky .....	3416

## PETITIONS

### Landfill

Ms. MacLeod .....	3416
Mr. Sterling .....	3416

### Identity theft

Mr. Ruprecht .....	3416
--------------------	------

### Community mediation

Mr. Delaney .....	3417
Mr. Kular .....	3418

### Highway 26

Mr. Wilson .....	3417
------------------	------

### Long-term care

Mrs. Mitchell .....	3417
Mr. Ruprecht .....	3418
Mr. Sterling .....	3418
Mrs. Munro .....	3418

## Recycling

Mr. Chudleigh .....	3417
---------------------	------

## Property taxation

Mr. Ruprecht .....	3419
--------------------	------

## SECOND READINGS

### Greater Toronto Transportation

<b>Authority Act, 2006, Bill 104, Mr. Takhar</b>	
Mr. Takhar .....	3419, 3423, 3426
Mr. McNeely .....	3421, 3434
Mr. Sterling .....	3422, 3423, 3427
Ms. Martel .....	3422, 3427, 3434
Mr. Ramal .....	3422
Mr. Dunlop .....	3423
Mr. Tabuns .....	3426, 3427, 3435
Mr. Jackson .....	3427
Mr. Racco .....	3433
Mrs. Elliott .....	3434
Debate deemed adjourned .....	3435

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2006

## DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Bois d'oeuvre</b>	
M. Ramsay .....	3403
M. Miller .....	3405
M. Bisson .....	3406
<b>Revendication territoriale des Autochtones</b>	
M. Ramsay .....	3404
M. Miller .....	3405
M. Hampton .....	3406

## QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Langue et culture françaises</b>	
M. Patten .....	3413
M <sup>me</sup> Meilleur .....	3413

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2006 sur la Régie des transports du grand Toronto, projet de loi 104, M. Takhar</b>	
Débat présumé ajourné .....	3435





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Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 1 May 2006

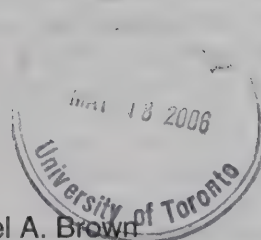
Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2006

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 81, An Act to implement 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts, when Bill 81 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs; and

That no deferral of the second reading vote shall be permitted; and

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs meet on Thursday, May 4, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and following routine proceedings for the purpose of public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 81; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on May 4, 2006. On that day, at not later than 5 p.m. those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than Monday, May 8, 2006. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and

at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading which order may be called on that same day; and

That on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m. as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That when the time allotted for debate has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Ramsey has moved government notice of motion 125. Mr. Ramsay.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I'm going to make a few introductory remarks. I will be sharing my time with the member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, Mr. Arthurs.

I would just like to take a few moments to talk about the budget. As I have been travelling and making some announcements related to the budget, one of the things that has really occurred to me is the appreciation our municipalities have for the extra infrastructure money that our Minister of Finance has brought forward under the Move Ontario program. Those announcements, as I think all members of the House realize, were absolute, immediate cash transfers to our municipal partners for the good work they do with infrastructure, and were very much appreciated by our municipal leadership right across this province.

**1850**

I think they were kind of surprised that it wasn't a program announcement and we didn't require them to fill out a lot of paper. They recognized that the Ontario government trusts their judgment to make decisions at the local level as to where they need to make those infrastructure expenditures. To have specially targeted roads and bridges meant they were able to allocate extra projects in those particular categories or, if not, substitute that money and maybe pay more attention to some of the water and sewer projects they weren't able to finance this year. So it was very much appreciated.

It was a week ago that the government, in conjunction with the federal government, announced the COMRIF grants to our municipal partners, which was a second round of infrastructure transfers to municipalities. Mr.



Speaker, they very much appreciate that, as I know you know, because it's an equal one-third partnership between the federal government, the provincial government and municipalities. Our municipal partners apply to the provincial government. We have a due diligence system in place now, where we basically make the decisions and make those recommendations to the federal government, which now, by and large, accepts the judgment based on the competition that the COMRIF application becomes, and then together we make those announcements. I know those were very well received.

We know that the absolute participation rate in the COMRIF program really brings home to us the infrastructure deficit we have in this province. I know that when most people hear the word "deficit," they think of a fiscal one. Of course, our Minister of Finance has brought to the attention of the Legislature the horrendous fiscal deficit we inherited from the previous government. But I think the various ministers, and of course Premier McGuinty himself, have made it quite clearly known that Ontario faces many deficits. It's not just the fiscal deficit, which is the dollars and cents required to run a government, but we also found we had a health care deficit, an education deficit and, as I've just talked about, a severe infrastructure deficit.

Programs like Move Ontario and COMRIF help address this, because a lot of it can be handled very well at the local level. It's not just the provincial infrastructure of our highways, bridges and roads and the infrastructure of our schools, hospitals, universities and other post-secondary institutions, but it's the very important infrastructure that the local governments raise money for, build and maintain that is very important. Those are probably some of the most important because they involve safety and security. As our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, likes to say, what happened after the tragedy of Walkerton was that people in Ontario always had faith that when you turned on the tap you could drink the water that came out in safety, but after we saw what happened in Walkerton, we knew this was no longer necessarily the case. That's why this government has earmarked water and sewer especially, to make sure we have the safest drinking water in the world, a standard that Ontarians would expect to have. It's very important. We hope the federal government will continue the partnership with us to help with our municipal partners to address this infrastructure deficit and transfer the money to the municipalities that do the work of maintaining our water and sewer systems.

I wanted to touch on that because it's one aspect of this budget that is maybe not a point that a lot of people like to make, because maybe it's not the most interesting of topics, but it's so fundamental to the health and safety of Ontarians that we have safe drinking water. It's very important for this government to make sure that our municipal partners have the money and that all three government levels work together to ensure that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join the debate this evening on Bill 81. Actually, it's a time allocation motion on Bill 81, which is the budget bill, An Act to implement 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts. I would like to talk specifically about this bill and generally about the budget itself.

This morning I attended the Parry Sound Municipal Association meeting. I was there first thing in the morning at South River. One of the points I made was that in Bill 81, hidden away in this budget bill, is a change to the term of municipal elected officials. We're kind of disappointed about that because, as the opposition, I think we disagree with the government's budgetary policy, so we're going to vote against the budget motion, I'm sure—rather, this Bill 81 motion—but that's kind of thrown in the middle of it. I was really seeking input at the Parry Sound Municipal Association meeting as to whether they think the four-year term is a good idea or not. A four-year term really kind of came out of nowhere. It certainly wasn't discussed around Queen's Park too much. Just when the Ontario Good Roads/Rural Ontario Municipal Association meeting was occurring, the Premier, I believe it was, went and made the announcement about this proposed four-year term. It kind of came out of the blue. I think he did it because there was nothing else he had announced, so he thought this would be a popular item with some of the elected officials.

I have to say that, at least for rural Ontario, it seems that it's not necessarily that popular. I've had a number of elected officials approach me about the four-year term, with more negative—I don't think I've had any come to me with positive feelings about it. Just about all of them have been negative. In a rural area like Parry Sound or Muskoka, but in particular in the Parry Sound side of the riding where I have many small municipalities, I have to say the average age of the elected officials is fairly high. I know one elected mayor was saying to me that he has councillors who are 68, and do they want to be an elected member of council when they're 72? Having an extra year tacked on is actually negative in rural Ontario. I raised it in my speech this morning at the Parry Sound Municipal Association just to say, "I'll probably have an opportunity at some point to comment on this. Please let me know your feelings." I had to leave early to be here at 1:30, but I did have one person as I was leaving come and say exactly that. They said, "I'm 68 and I'm probably not going to run because that extra year is just more commitment than I want to make." If you are young, it may work the same way, that in a rural area you don't necessarily want to take on the commitment because of the longer time frame.

There have also been some negative editorials in some of the newspapers in our area to do with that. I wish it wasn't part of this budget bill, that it was something separate, part of a municipal bill instead of tied in with this budget bill. As I say, the feedback I'm getting on the four-year term in rural and northern Ontario seems to be more negative than positive. If it's going to discourage



people from running, then that's a bad thing. As I say, the age of some of our elected councillors in rural areas is fairly high.

The Minister of Natural Resources briefly was speaking about the COMRIF announcements. There again there seems to be—I mean, obviously there are some municipalities happy they got some positive results from that arrangement, but there are a lot that are unhappy too. I've certainly heard from a number of them. I was up at Powassan, at the Maple Syrup Festival there. It was right after the COMRIF announcements were being made public, and among the municipal politicians taking part in the Powassan maple syrup pancake flipping contest, that seemed to be a hot topic, that they had applied again, they'd spent a lot of money hiring engineers to put together the proposal, and once again they were disappointed.

Some rural municipalities have real challenges that are not being met. I know the mayor of Sundridge, Elgin Schneider, was quite disappointed when I was talking to him as well on the same day, not at the Powassan Maple Syrup Festival but in Sundridge, expressing how frustrated he was that once again they'd applied for a very worthwhile project and once again they were turned down.

I have to say that with some other areas of funding, such as the OMPF program—I know the city of North Bay is very disappointed with that funding.

Mister Whip, I'm not quite sure what signs you're giving me.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** We're not happy.

**Mr. Miller:** Oh, you're not happy. But certainly there are some areas—I have followed the North Bay press, and they are extremely unhappy with the funding they've had. They've got some real challenges; I think they have a \$4.3-million predicted deficit in the North Bay budget in the next couple of years.

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The budget in general: For me personally, the thing I was most disappointed in was that the budget was not balanced in what are relatively good times and times when the government had an extra \$2.2 billion in revenue and they had some savings in interest payments. So they had \$3 billion more to spend in revenue than they planned on when they made the budget a year ago, and yet, even with that extra \$3 billion, they didn't balance the budget. I think that's irresponsible in times that are relatively good, because if the economy should have a downturn, then there are things that require government spending that are beyond the government's control, and they won't be able to control the deficit without some real cuts to people who need it at that point.

In looking at some of the responses to the budget around the area, I think Toronto is probably relatively happy, but lots of other areas aren't. The London Free Press: "Most of Area Feels Left Out by Province." These are various clippings I've saved from the budget reaction.

The London Free Press, March 24: "By the Numbers: Ontario's Budget; Toronto-Area Commuters Get Most of

the Money as Province Seeks to Improve Bridges, Roads, Transit."

The Kingston Whig-Standard, Saturday, March 25: "Money for Roads Won't Go Far, Mayors Say: Provincial Budget Barely Begins to Cover City's Needs."

As I mentioned, there are a lot of negative articles in the North Bay area to do with the provincial budget and OMPF funding. "Area Mayor 'Fuming' Over Provincial Budget: Toronto Gets Cash, While Mattawa Awaits Its Hospital." That's the North Bay Nugget, Saturday, March 25.

I've toured the Mattawa hospital. If there were ever a hospital that this government should agree to getting built, it's the Mattawa hospital. I can tell you, they've got an old building and they've also got portables. I don't think it meets even the current health and safety standards, and yet the government has not funded the very much required new hospital for Mattawa.

Reading from this article, "Mattawa has been left out in the cold by a provincial budget that promises to move forward with nearly a dozen other hospital projects in Ontario...."

"I'm fuming right now ... all they've done is thrown a bunch of hush money at us," said Papineau-Cameron mayor Robert Corriveau.

"He said funds included in the budget for northern Ontario are aimed at placating communities that are getting a small fraction of the cash that's been devoted to the greater Toronto area."

The North Bay Nugget, March 27: "Toronto-Heavy Budget Focuses on 2007 Election." It's very much geared towards winning the next election—political. "Doug West, a political science professor at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, said the Liberals clearly had next year's provincial election in mind when they drafted the budget, which he said offered virtually no help to northern Ontario."

The Sudbury Star: "Budget Offers Few Surprises: Predictably, Toronto and Its Neighbours Were the Beneficiaries of Liberal Handouts." That's Friday the 24th. As I look down through the article, "Nor was there anything new or tangible for northern Ontario's troubled forestry sector."

Then we get later, looking at OMPF funding, the North Bay Nugget, Wednesday, April 19: "Funding Shortfall Has City Ranting." It has been debated many times in North Bay, and they're extremely unhappy.

The Premier was up in North Bay. It was a little embarrassing; he was in North Bay and he called North Bay "Sudbury"—always a bad thing to do in North Bay. There were a couple of negative articles to do with that.

I know we have other members who would like to speak, so I'll allow them time now. I am disappointed that the four-year term is part of this budget measures bill, Bill 81. Of course, we're discussing time allocation this evening. That's where the government is effectively ending debate on Bill 81 to shove it through.

I look forward to hearing from our other members this evening.



**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I'm pleased to participate in the debate this evening. I had a chance to speak on the bill when we dealt with it last week, and I had so much fun that I want to participate again. I'm going to be raising some of the same issues again, because you can't raise some of these issues enough.

Just with respect to the previous speaker, who was talking about the Mattawa hospital, I heard some Liberals trying to blame the Conservatives. My clear recollection is that the application for capital funding for the new Mattawa hospital went in to the ministry in June 2004, the Liberal government in place—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. Martel:** —and almost two years later, the Mattawa hospital has heard zero, zip, nada from the government about when they're going to be able to proceed.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Nipissing will come to order, please.

**Ms. Martel:** The reality is that these poor folks have a hospital that is completely substandard with respect to health and safety. The board has lobbied this government, ONA has lobbied this government, a number of health care professionals have lobbied this government. The only thing the government could come up with was some short-term money to deal with the most outrageous and egregious health and safety problems, but the fact of the matter remains that a new hospital needs to be built and this government has got to get off the pot and make a decision about this hospital.

It's not even a big amount of money. My recollection is that, at most, it might be \$13 million we're talking about to build a new hospital. With the \$3-billion wind-fall this government experienced in the last budget, you would think this Liberal government could find \$13 million to build a new Mattawa hospital. I hope they do it before the second anniversary of the date the application for funding actually went in.

Let me deal with two of the schedules in the bill that I have the most concern with. The first is schedule I, which refers to the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corporations Act. That is the schedule that is going to merge the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority and the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp. Of course, members will know that both of these bodies are playing an intermediate project management role in the private financing of hospitals that is now going on under the Liberals.

Speaker, you will not be surprised that I am opposed to the private financing of hospital construction in the province, just like Dalton McGuinty used to be opposed to the private financing of hospitals before and during the last election. Now it's good to remind those who are watching out there this evening of what Mr. McGuinty said on the record with respect to P3 hospitals. Let me read some of these quotes into the record. Here we are, May 28, 2003, just a couple months before the provincial election was called. Mr. McGuinty was speaking to the

Ottawa Citizen—Rod McIvor—and said the following: "What I take issue with is the mechanism. We believe in public ownership and public financing [of health care]." Oh, but there's more. In the same article, "Mr. McGuinty warned recently that if the Liberals are elected in the provincial election now expected in the fall, they will stop private sector financing of hospitals, the so-called P3s, which the Conservative government is pushing as the way of the future." The key words here are, "They will stop private sector financing of hospitals."

But there's more: "Mr. McGuinty believes that public-private sector partnerships in health care would ultimately cost the province more money than traditional arrangements." My, my, my, imagine that. I agree with him. He's right. He was right before the election. I don't know how he had such a dramatic change in his way of thinking.

But wait. That was before the election. Now I want to read in the quotes from during the election campaign. What did Mr. McGuinty have to say about private financing of hospitals? Here is Dalton McGuinty featured in the Ottawa Citizen, Wednesday, September 24, 2003, about a week left to go on the election campaign, isn't that right, Mr. Marchese? About a week left to go, and what does he say? This is according to Dave Rogers: "Ontario Liberal leader McGuinty has said the [Royal Ottawa Hospital] expansion will go ahead because Ottawa needs a new psychiatric hospital, but a Liberal government would cancel the deal with the private consortium because public-private partnerships are a waste of money." Thank you, Dalton. There you are: a week to go before election day, saying the Royal Ottawa Hospital is going to go forward, but the Liberals, if elected, are going to cancel the private financing because public-private partnerships are a waste of money.

1910

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** And what happened?

**Ms. Martel:** What happened? The Liberals win the election. No sooner did the Liberals win the election than the Brampton hospital and the Royal Ottawa Hospital are going through with private financing, contrary to what Mr. McGuinty promised. How can that be? How could Mr. McGuinty say one thing before the election about how private-public partnerships were such a waste of money and, if elected, his government would cancel these deals, and then just weeks after forming the government, change his mind and go forward with the Brampton and the Royal Ottawa deals, private sector financing in both cases? So many people out there voted for Mr. McGuinty because they believed him when he said he was going to cancel these deals. Imagine the slap in the face they got when, just weeks after becoming the government, the Liberals proceeded with the deals with respect to private financing that had been put in place by the Tories.

It gets worse, because not only did Mr. McGuinty backtrack—that's the nicest word I can think of here tonight that will keep me out of trouble—not only did he backtrack on the promise with respect to Brampton and



the Royal Ottawa Hospital but the next thing you know, the government of Ontario is up and running and making announcements of at least 24 new privately financed hospitals in the province of Ontario—24. That's a little contrary to the promise he made during the election. This year, in this budget, 11 requests for proposals for 11 privately financed hospitals will go out the door at the ministry of infrastructure renewal—11 in this year alone.

I am opposed to private financing, like Dalton McGuinty used to be, because private financing of public hospitals costs the taxpayers more. Why is that? The reason is that government—not the private sector, but government—gets the lowest rate for borrowing money. We are talking about huge sums of money that will have to be borrowed for this hospital construction. The second reason I am opposed, and that Dalton McGuinty presumably was opposed before the election, is because the private sector, unlike government, is in this business to make some money. Under the traditional capital financing of hospitals, when government borrowed the money, they didn't add 20% on to the construction cost, because they were not in the business of making money off those projects. But the private consortiums surely are in the business, and you can bet your bottom dollar that a 15% or 20% profit margin is going to be factored into that final cost and drive the price up even more.

What do we know about Brampton? An independent analysis of the Brampton hospital alone, because it is a major construction project, shows that the taxpayers of Ontario are going to spend \$175 million more because that project is being privately financed instead of being publicly financed by the government, like Dalton McGuinty promised—\$175 million for one project alone. Eleven privately financed hospital projects are going to tender this year. How many taxpayers' dollars do you think are going to be wasted because we are using this model of private financing? It's \$175 million for one; by the time we finish with these 24, I'll bet you we spend \$1 billion extra to privately finance these hospitals.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's the least Dalton could do to help the private sector.

**Ms. Martel:** I know the private sector is in such desperate straits that Dalton has to give them \$1 billion. But aside from the clear broken promise before the election and during the election campaign, the other important point is that that \$1 billion should be going into patient care, into hospital services, into health services, into health care for the people of Ontario. That's \$1 billion that's going to go into the pockets of the private sector consortiums that win those requests for proposals to build these privately financed hospitals.

That's nuts. That model is absolutely nuts. It was nuts before the election—Dalton McGuinty was right—and it's nuts now. The only question is, why is it that Dalton McGuinty flipped and flopped and flopped and flipped after the election and is now moving to private financing, which is going to suck out so much public money that should be going into patient care and putting it into the profits of the private sector consortium? Shame on

Dalton McGuinty for saying one thing before the election and during the election and for doing exactly the opposite after. I'll bet this broken promise is going to have a price tag, before we're done, of \$1 billion which will be spent through private financing that would not have been spent if Dalton McGuinty had done what he promised, and that was to build hospitals, do hospital construction, in the traditional way, with government doing the borrowing. That's schedule I.

Let me deal with schedule D of the bill. That's the schedule in Bill 81 that reduces the rate of capital tax payable for 2007-08 by 5%, thus accelerating the phase-out of the capital tax. Do you know that eventually the elimination of the capital tax, which is scheduled, I think, to go over a 10-year period, although it might be less now with the acceleration this year, is going to cost the province of Ontario \$1.2 billion? That's \$1.2 billion that will essentially go to the banks and the insurance companies in the province of Ontario. I remember seeing some of the profit margins of the insurance companies a couple of months ago, and my recollection is that they made record profits last fiscal year. Record profits were made by the insurance industry. Now we've got to give them even more. They're hardly broke. They're hardly poor. It is unbelievable to me that this government would move forward with a \$1.2-billion windfall for the banks and the insurance companies, when it's all rolled out, at a time when we have many other serious and important social and educational programs that we could fund in the province of Ontario.

So not only does the private sector probably get a billion bucks when it's all over because they're going to be involved in the private financing of hospitals, but now this same government is accelerating the phase-out of the capital tax and is going to give some of these other poor, poor companies in the province of Ontario, banks and insurance companies, another \$1.2 billion by the time it's all said and done.

I say to you that that money could be invested in some things that are far more important than increasing the profits of the banks and insurance companies. I've got to tell you, that's what I think. Let me just give some examples of those programs that I think could benefit far more from some of this investment than the money that the banks and the insurance companies are going to make. I say it in the context of a related fact, which is that in this most recent budget this government had a \$3-billion windfall. So there was \$1.2 billion that they had to throw away, to give to the banks and the insurance companies, and in addition to that a \$3-billion windfall.

What could the government have done? The first thing the government could have done was kept its promise on the clawback of the national child benefit. Here is what the Liberals said before the election and during the election. Here's another promise I've got to read into the record. Here's what the Liberals said in a questionnaire that was sent by the Campaign Against Child Poverty. The question that the Liberals had to answer was this: "Will your party make it a priority to end the clawback of



the national child benefit supplement from families on social assistance?" The response from the Liberals during the election: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong and we will end it. The Harris-Eves government has reinforced the cycle of poverty, not broken it."

That wasn't the first promise made about the clawback. In a letter dated July 31, 2003, to June Callwood on behalf of the Campaign Against Child Poverty, Mr. McGuinty said, "Second, my team and I oppose the Conservative government's practice of clawing back the national child benefit ... a practice we will end during our first mandate." What has this government done? Precious little, pathetically little with respect to the clawback of the national child benefit.

#### 1920

The only thing that the Liberals have done is allow the poorest families in the province, those on social assistance and those on ODSP, to keep the rate-of-inflation increase that goes with the benefit each year. So if it's an increase of 2% or 3%, they don't get to keep the whole benefit; they only get to keep that 2% or 3% portion, about \$20 a month per child. About 20 bucks a month is what the Liberals are allowing the poorest families in Ontario to keep from the national child benefit.

Do you know what? The national child benefit was established by the federal government to put money into the hands of the poorest families in Canada. It is a transfer of federal money to the provinces that should be directed to the hands of those families that are the poorest: those on social assistance, those on ODSP. Here we are in the province of Ontario, a province with a \$3-billion windfall in the last election, and the best the Liberal government can do, after making the promises it did, is give \$20 a month per child to these families. Do you know what they're losing? About \$1,500 a year as a result of this government not living up to the promises it made in the last election. Imagine the difference that \$1,500 could make in the pocket of some of the poorest families in Ontario. Shame, shame, shame on this government for breaking this important promise.

Do you know what's worse? I've heard the kind of pathetic excuse the government uses as to why they have to keep the clawback in place. The pathetic excuse that I've now heard two ministers use is, "The money we steal back from the clawback"—because that's what it is; it's stealing that money right out of the hands of the poorest families in the province—"is money that we put into early childhood development initiatives in communities." Do you know what? We knew that. Everybody knew that. The Liberals knew that because that's what was done under the Conservatives too. That's not anything new. When the Conservatives decided to steal the clawback money, they put money into communities too for childhood development. In fact, every year a report is generated that shows how much money has gone out, to which community and which program that the money has been spent on. Nothing new there, and the Liberals knew when they made the promise that that's where the

balance of the money was going. But that doesn't stop them now from holding up their hands and saying, "We can't stop the clawback. This is money that goes to communities, and who else would fund those programs?"

Do you know who else should fund the programs? The province of Ontario, because the province of Ontario, the McGuinty Liberal government, made a very clear promise in the last election that it would end the clawback, period—not a portion of it, not the inflationary increase portion of it but all of it—and give that money to the poorest families in the province. It's the McGuinty Liberal government who should find the \$220 million—and that's all it is—that they steal from the lowest-paid families in Ontario, from the poorest families. They should stop stealing that \$220 million and instead put \$220 million on the table for those communities that provide those initiatives.

Do you know what? I am very proud that my own municipality just in the last two weeks moved a motion to urge Premier Dalton McGuinty to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement and put \$100 a month back into the hands of the poorest families. The Sudbury and district health board on Thursday called on the Premier to identify child and family poverty as a health issue that needs to be addressed by his government. They went on to move, as part of the motion, that it should be this government that funds the \$220 million of initiatives in communities for early childhood development. Good, good, good for the board of health in the city of greater Sudbury. Congratulations to them for understanding the problem and for calling on the government to do the right thing, indeed to do what it promised in the last election. The only question is, when is this government going to live up to this election promise and stop stealing federal money from the poorest families in Ontario?

Let me look at another election promise that this government made, one that was raised by my colleague Andrea Horwath in this House today. That has to do with the Liberal government's promise, before the election and during the election, on child care. Here we go again. This was a 2003 questionnaire from the Campaign Against Child Poverty. The question was as follows: "How will your party increase access to high-quality licensed child care?" The answer from the McGuinty Liberals, during the campaign: "The Harris-Eves government has not put a penny into licensed child care. We are proposing an infusion of \$300 million." Do you know what? The Liberal McGuinty government has not put one cent of new money into child care since they have been elected. Any and all money that has gone to child care in the province of Ontario under the Liberals has been the federal money that was flowed through the federal government to the province to disburse to communities for child care. Where is the promised \$300 million?

Speaker, I know that you as a member of the finance committee last year moved a motion in the finance committee that the Liberal government should keep its promise and should provide \$300 million in last year's



budget for child care in Ontario, and I know that the Liberal members on that committee voted your motion down. This year, because you sit on the same committee, you moved another motion. You said, "Okay, we couldn't get \$300 million from your last year; maybe we can get \$150 million." So you moved a motion in the committee that the Liberals spend \$150 million this year in child care, half of what they promised during the election campaign. What happened? The Liberal members on the committee voted that motion down too.

Where is this government's commitment to child care? If you look at the estimates for this year, not only is there no new money for child care in Ontario—not \$300 million, not \$150 million, not \$100 million—not only is there not one single new penny of provincial money for child care in the province, but the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is estimating a cut of 22% in the child care budget this year—a cut of 22% in the budget this year to child care in Ontario. Where is your commitment to child care? For goodness' sake, you folks have the audacity to point your finger at the federal government and talk to them about child care. Look at yourselves in the mirror, folks, and ask yourselves the question, "Where is the McGuinty Liberal government's \$300 million that was promised in the last election?" Better yet, why is it that there is a 22% cut in the budget for child care at the ministry of children and family services this year? You have no credibility whatsoever when it comes to pointing the finger at Stephen Harper. You've got no credibility, folks, because not only have you not lived up to your election promise, you're actually cutting your child care budget this year. That's the reality. I know it hurts. I know you don't want to hear that, but you are on no good ground at all to point fingers anywhere else when you have absolutely and utterly failed to live up to your own election promise of adding \$300 million more to the child care budget in Ontario.

I could go on, but my colleague Mr. Marchese is here this evening too and I know there are some comments he wants to make with respect to the budget. I think there is probably just one more, if you'll bear with me. Give me a few minutes more, Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Take your time.

**Ms. Martel:** He's going to give me a few minutes more. I just want to speak about autism.

Here's a letter sent by Dalton McGuinty during the election, September 17, 2003, to Nancy Morrison, who is the mother of then-five-year-old Sean, who has autism. Here is what Mr. McGuinty had to say, because Nancy wrote and wanted to know what the positions of all the political parties were with respect to funding for IBI, intensive behavioural intervention, treatment. Here is what he said to Nancy Morrison:

"I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six. We are not at all confident that the Harris-Eves Conservatives care to devise any innovative solution for autistic children over six—

especially those with best outcome possibilities that might potentially be helped within the school system with specially trained EAs.

"In government, my team and I will work with clinical directors, parents, teachers and school boards to devise a feasible way in which autistic children in our province can get the support and treatment they need. That includes children over the age of six."

**1930**

What did the government do after the election? Right after the election, the Liberal government kept right on discriminating against kids over the age of six and kept right on cutting them off IBI treatment the moment they turned six, just like the Conservative government before them. The Liberal government kept right on challenging the Deskin and Wynberg families and the other families who are part of that court appeal, spending millions of dollars that could have been better spent on treatments to fight these families every step of the way and even more aggressively than the Conservative government.

What's happening in the school? Nothing. There is no IBI therapist in the school; there is no IBI training in the school. You've got this hoax of a program where you have consultants who go into the school and give some advice to teachers about how to deal with autistic children. They're not providing IBI; they're not even working directly with kids with autism. It's a hoax for a program. It's a complete waste of money.

Give credit to the families who have struggled against the Conservatives and against the Liberals. Last year in April, Justice Kiteley's ruling came down. That ruling was in favour of families with autistic children in the province. The ruling made it very clear that the government of Ontario was violating the Charter of Rights of autistic children on the basis of their age and on the basis of their disability and that the Minister of Education was violating the Education Act because he was refusing to provide the supports and services that autistic children need to learn in Ontario's school education system.

As a result of that order, which remains in place unless and until it is overturned via the Ontario Court of Appeal, and we await that decision now, only as a result of that order by Justice Kiteley is IBI now being provided to children over the age of six, only because Justice Kiteley ordered it. It remains in place unless the Ontario Court of Appeal decides otherwise, not because the Liberals decided to live up to their promise; oh, no, because they didn't. They are being forced to do this now because of a court ruling, which they of course have gone to court to try to overturn. I was in court in December when the second case was heard, and I was appalled to hear the position of the Liberal government with respect to these families in light of the letter Dalton McGuinty sent to Nancy Morrison, mother of Sean, autistic child, then aged five.

We'll await that decision and, God willing, the Court of Appeal is going to be in favour of these parents. I sure hope so. But in the meantime, what has happened with respect to funding for autistic children? We've raised



questions about the wait-list and we've been told, "Well, the reason there's a wait-list for kids now is because of this ruling. Isn't that terrible?" Do you know what? We did some FOI requests and just got the information back. Most recently, we found the following: In 2003-04—so this is a fiscal year under the Liberal government—the total budget for autism was \$80 million. The total expenditure was \$44 million. So \$36 million dollars was unspent in this program. Some \$2.6 million went to other children's programs within the ministry, \$1.5 million went to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and \$32 million was returned to the consolidated revenue fund at a time when we had about 399 children on a wait-list who qualified for IBI but couldn't get it because there wasn't enough funding in the autism program to provide IBI—\$32 million went back to the consolidated revenue fund.

Let's look at fiscal 2004-05. The total budget projected for autism programming in the province: \$89 million. Total expenditures: \$67 million. The program was underspent by \$21 million. Where did that money go? Twenty-one million dollars were applied to other children's programs within the ministry. At a time when we had more kids than ever before on a waiting list for IBI because of Justice Kiteley's ruling, at a time when we had more kids than ever before waiting to be assessed, the Liberals diverted \$21 million from the autism program to other children's programs in the ministry. That is a disgrace. There's no other way to describe it. It's a complete disgrace and a slap in the face to those parents whom Mr. McGuinty made such a solemn promise to before the election and whom he was so quick to turn his back on after the election campaign.

In closing, I'll say again that I hope the Court of Appeal comes down in favour of the families because then justice will finally be served. But it is a disgrace that these families had to go to court again under the McGuinty government, especially in light of the promise this Liberal government made to these families.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** I'm pleased to join in the debate tonight on government resolution 125, as part of the time allocation. It's important at some point that we're allowed, as government, to move things along to the point of a vote in the Legislature and to move to the agenda of Bill 81, to have the opportunity to vote on it and give the people of Ontario the opportunity to see the implementation of the budget bill and all of the items that are included in it.

I'm pleased to be able to follow the Minister of Natural Resources, the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, and the member from Nickel Belt. We can kind of move a little bit south, in that sense, since my riding is here in the southern part of Ontario. I do want to take the opportunity, though, because the member from Nipissing provided a little bit of information, for clarity on the situation to the north of us in the area of North Bay. I just wanted to pose a couple of things based on some earlier comments.

During the first round of COMRIF, North Bay had the largest single allocation from COMRIF, some \$30 million for their water treatment plant, so it's not as though North Bay is being ignored. I understand that the city received some \$3.4 million in this year's provincial budget for roads and bridges, not unlike municipalities throughout Ontario. I wouldn't think from that context that they're being ignored. Some \$900,000 in gas tax money this year went to the city of North Bay to help with the construction of the city's transit terminal. I think municipalities like North Bay are being treated fairly and responsibly, not unlike other municipalities throughout the province of Ontario.

This budget is about Ontarians. It's about our government effectively being onside with Ontario families, who want the best for their children in the form of public education. That's why, as part of the mandate—and we've heard the words during the course of this evening about commitments over a mandate. Mandates mean you have a four-year period. We've chosen a fixed time frame—not able to do everything on day one or day two. Over the course of this particular mandate, focusing on education, we have delivered a high degree of peace and stability in the education setting. One only needs to go into the schools and talk to the staff, parents, support staff or children to realize it's a very different environment in the school setting now than we had just two or three short years ago.

During that period of time, we've managed to see provincial standards test scores go up from some 50% to some 62% of students who are either meeting or exceeding provincial standards. So we're well on the way to achieving the out-year goals with respect to where we want students to be when it comes to standardized testing—as minimums, not as maximums.

During the mandate to this point—and it's not over yet. There's a four-year mandate to achieve a number of things. There has been the hiring of some 4,300 new teachers, and we've delivered, incidentally, some one million new textbooks into the schools. Those are things that often aren't mentioned during the course of the year, but they're certainly important to those young people in the school setting who need those resources, either directly there during the day or, frankly, to take them home with them—something that hasn't happened very much for a long time. But 4,300 new teachers means a lot fewer students in the classroom for those children who are most in need.

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Class sizes are coming down. We made a commitment during this mandate to lower class sizes for JK to 3, the primary group, with caps at 20 children. We're well on our way to achieving that. Frankly, some 70% of classes are now benefiting from smaller class sizes, and each child in the classroom is benefiting. I can speak to that from personal experience, as my wife teaches grade 1. She has taught grade 1 for a lot of years and she knows the difference when you have 25, 26 or 27 grade 1s and when you have 18, 19, 20 or even 21 grade 1s. Those



four or five children make a big difference in the type of program a grade 1 teacher or a grade 2 teacher can deliver to those students, and the amount of time they can expend on students in their classroom who have real needs.

We're also on the side of Ontarians as it relates to opportunities for their children when it comes to post-secondary education. Education clearly is a central theme of this mandate that we have for four years. There are some 75,000 more opportunities for post-secondary education for students. We've doubled student aid so that families can afford higher education—those lower-earning families in our communities who don't have the capacity to pay the full tuition, who don't have the capacity to ensure that their children get access to post-secondary education. We're doubling the income threshold to make sure that students can qualify.

We're also ensuring that those student loans don't end up burdening students so heavily at the end of the day that they're 15 years getting out of debt. The student loan portion is being capped, and anything that might be eligible to the most needy students is going to be forgiven. It effectively becomes a grant over the top. That's going to provide not only opportunity to get into the system, but it's also going to provide an opportunity, when they're finished, to realize in a relatively short period of time the real earning power that can come with post-secondary education and the opportunity to participate fully in the province of Ontario.

We have been busy creating new trade spaces. Some 1,000 training spaces for skilled trades have been created.

We're investing in total some \$6.2 billion over five years in the post-secondary system. It's the largest investment in post-secondary education in an entire generation.

For the first couple of years we froze tuition, but we recognize that that's not sustainable either. We need to invest in those who have the greatest need, but in doing that we have to ensure that students also continue to support the system as they're best able.

We're also on the side of Ontario families who want the best in health care. We've added new vaccines free of charge for the youngest in our communities.

We're expanding access to doctors, nurses and professionals in our community. There are some 3,000-plus more nursing positions today than there were just a couple of short years ago.

We've launched 150 family health teams ahead of schedule, and those are beginning to roll out. It will take some time for them to become fully operational, but they're going to provide better care to some 2.5 million Ontarians. We know far too well in many of our communities about the sparsity of trained professionals, about the ability to get a doctor, about the ability even to retain a doctor if you happen to have one. As they retire or move into other activities, it's very difficult to see them replaced, and the family health teams are going to be an important part of the primary health care system in Ontario.

We're adding positions for internationally trained medical graduates.

In those key areas that we set out, wait times are coming down. We're funding some 31,000 additional surgical procedures, 24% more MRI exams, 7% more cancer surgeries, 20% more hip and knee replacements, 15% more cataract surgeries and 7% more cardiac procedures. So more people are getting treatments and they're getting them quicker.

When we came to office, there were a lot of announcements in play by the former government when it came to hospitals. As a matter of fact, I think something like 39 or 40 announcements were made in the spring and summer of 2003. None of them had funding in place, but they were all announced. So the expectations for those communities were set very high, with no financial capacity in place to meet those needs. We're working through that list, plus the list that has been established as priorities in other communities in Ontario. I can tell you, in my own home community of Pickering and Ajax we've recently, in this budget, announced the redevelopment and expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital as part of the Rouge Valley Health System.

I can tell you, during the past couple years in my community people have been saying, "Well, we were promised our hospital." There was a complete lack of understanding about what that meant. In reality, this year was the first year that my local hospital could even have been considered for its redevelopment, because it was only last June, after the budget, that they managed to finalize their community portion for their hospital redevelopment. I suspect there are hospitals throughout Ontario that are faced with the same types of situations. We're moving through those hospitals in an expeditious fashion with some 11 projects during this year.

I could spend some considerable time on Bill 81, on this time allocation necessary to move forward in the province of Ontario on an important part of a four-year mandate. There is more to come. For those who will consistently criticize government for not achieving everything on day one, it's important for the opposition to keep the government's feet to the fire. I am confident that to the greatest extent possible, those commitments that were made during the last provincial campaign will be realized prior to the end of this mandate in October 2007.

I appreciate the opportunity to bring some insights into our budget for this year. I look forward to the balance of the debate and, most particularly, to the opportunity for the people of Ontario to have the experience that will come with the actual implementation of this budget.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I guess I'm pleased to be here tonight speaking on the Budget Measures Act, but the reality is that we're speaking on a closure motion, as I understand it. That means the government doesn't really want to discuss the bill anymore—not enough debate. I guess they feel that it's an opportunity to fast-track this bill through and end the democratic right of people to say a few words.

There are a couple areas I'd like to speak on for a few moments, one being the policing community, which is



my critic's portfolio, and the other of course being COMRIF, which I believe is an area of concern that many of us in rural Ontario feel deeply disappointed about.

I want to talk a little bit about police, first of all. Day after day I listen to the minister talk about how wonderful things are in the policing community. But when I question him on things like the expenditures estimates, he tells me that this book, the expenditure estimates for 2006-07—that they're not accurate, that it's all at the discretion of the policing community. I think of things like the field and traffic services of the OPP that have been cut this year by \$31 million. The minister, Mr. Kwinter, says that's not so, that there are discretionary factors in there and that the reality is that there have been no cuts to that area. But we all know that's likely not the case, that the field and traffic services of the OPP are in a province that's expanding, when there are more cars on the road. We know there's more criminal activity today than there probably has been in a number of years. We know that cutting the field and traffic services by \$31 million is likely in effect hurting the OPP. I think of nothing more than what the Ontario Provincial Police have been going through just over the last month now with the case in Caledonia, where they've basically been left on their own to try to resolve a major dispute. My guess is that it's costing the Ontario Provincial Police at least a couple of million dollars extra for manpower, accommodation, food, extra vehicles that are required and overtime. That's their additional costs to date. I already asked the minister one time what it costs on a daily basis to have the Ontario Provincial Police at Caledonia.

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We often have special cases where we have to have extra OPP staff. For example, the Pope's visit a few years back—I believe it was in 2002—was a case where we needed additional staffing and the police were able to budget for that. There are other cases where there are major events in the province and the Ontario Provincial Police are able to staff for those as well. But when cases like Caledonia come up, there's no reserve for the OPP to fall back on to add another 100 officers in a certain community. With that, I want to go back and say that the Ontario Provincial Police do an absolutely phenomenal job, particularly policing rural Ontario. I am very concerned about the way they have been cut in this certain area.

Another area in which the OPP has been cut—again, this is what the estimates say; it's not what the minister says—is in fleet management; \$1.5 million has been cut. We all know that vehicles are going up in price. We all know that gasoline is probably costing the Ontario Provincial Police and their fleet 30% more than last year at this time, and we know that maintenance on vehicles is higher. But in this growing province, apparently with a growing overall budget, somehow we found a way to cut \$1.5 million out of the fleet management budget of the OPP: the vehicles they need to travel the roads, the boats they need to patrol the rivers and the additional

equipment they require to move their officers throughout the province.

I just want to say to the minister that I believe what the estimates say. Above and beyond that, though, I want to say that, in my opinion, having the OPP general headquarters in my riding of Simcoe North, what an honour it is to work with these people on a day-to-day basis. While talking about policing, I want to say that I was honoured to be part of the graduation ceremony at the Ontario Police College in Orillia the other day, when 84 OPP officers graduated into the rank and file. There were 10 women and 74 men. I just want to say to the police college and to Commissioner Gwen Boniface, on behalf of our caucus, what an excellent job they do for the province of Ontario. I just wish they had more support from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The other thing I wanted to mention was the COMRIF application. I'm not really sure where the Ontario government is going in this particular Canada-Ontario infrastructure program. In Simcoe county, we felt very badly left out of the process. Not a lot of money went to the COMRIF program. There was some money for one small road in the city of Orillia and a little bit of money for a bridge in the township of Tiny.

On one hand, the government brings in something called greenbelt legislation which escalates growth in the county of Simcoe by 25-some years. You'd think that if a government was planning on greenbelt legislation, that if they were bringing in that type of legislation to deal with planning in the province of Ontario, there would be more for sewer and water systems for the extra 500,000 or 600,000 people they expect to add to the county of Simcoe in the next 25 years. Of course that's without any impact studies on the wonderful and great Lake Simcoe that makes up one of our largest tourism areas and is a great jewel in the Ontario system.

I want to say on behalf of the people I represent in the riding of Simcoe North how deeply disappointed a number of municipalities were. The township of Tay was looking for some assistance in helping with their water program, and they got nothing. The township of Ramara was looking for money for the Brechin sewer system. They put in a couple of applications. We were told they were well received and well put together, and yet this government, although they had a bundle of money on the last week of the year, hoping that they could create a deficit—

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** Two hundred and seventy-seven applications in 1998—

**Mr. Dunlop:** I've gotten under the skin of the Minister of Labour, who hasn't got a clue what I'm talking about. The bottom line is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Dunlop:** Maybe the Minister of Labour should be giving the speech. Maybe he should have the floor, because clearly he hasn't got a clue what he's talking about. I'm just telling you that the Minister of Labour has no idea what he's talking about. He didn't when he was



the Minister of Agriculture, and now he's in this portfolio trying to—

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Dunlop:** Go ahead and say something.

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** —I take offence to the personal shots that are being delivered. I don't even want to get into it, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Obviously, the honourable member has taken some offence here, and I would ask you to be very careful in your remarks.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Maybe he shouldn't be heckling about things he doesn't know anything about.

The reality is, this budget did nothing for the citizens of rural Ontario, as usual. Wait. I should say that the counties of Hastings and Frontenac did well. They got money for roads and bridges. Is that not the case? They were sent a cheque at the last minute and, of course, the counties of Hastings and Frontenac have no roads and bridges. That's the type of wasteful—that's the little bit of thought that has been put into this budget. They spent a pile of money with the surplus dollars left over from the citizens of the province of Ontario at the end of the year, and they blew it. They couldn't pay down the debt. They wanted to come out next year with a fancy budget saying they had eliminated the deficit.

Clearly, I'm getting under their skin, because they don't want to hear the truth. All I'm trying to say today is that we were not well served by the COMRIF program in this round of applications. I'll conclude my remarks with that, because there are other members of my caucus who would like to make a few comments as well.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak to the strangulation motion, a motion that snuffs debate. As you would know, Speaker, I didn't have an opportunity to speak to Bill 81, so I take this opportunity to speak to this strangulation motion as a way of talking about the issues that I wanted to talk about.

We're on live. It's 8 o'clock. I welcome the listeners to this political forum. It's May 1, so that you know; you don't want to see any repeats. If it's a repeat, just move on. We're on live.

I want to start by mentioning a couple things raised by the member from Nickel Belt, and I want to repeat some of the stuff that she talked about as it relates to the public-private partnerships. It's important to spell it out because P3s mean nothing to people. I have to admit that if you say "public-private partnerships," it means even less. You've got to define it. What is clear, and the member from Nickel Belt made it expressively clear, is that when Dalton, the Premier, was in opposition he had a whole lot to say about the P3s, the so-called public-private partnerships. He said, and I repeat, "We believe in public ownership and public financing." Even the Tories believed in it.

But the Tories are real believers. They mean what they say, and they don't shy away from saying it. In fact, they say, "Yes, we're into P3s. Yes, we want to give a lot of money and profits to the private sector, but we're up

front." They make no bones about it. They're saying, "We don't want to spend any money as a state, as a province; we want to give a couple bucks to the private sector so they can make some money," because they're like this, the Tories and the private corporations. But at least they're clear. God bless them. New Democrats respect them for being so bald and bold about their politics. I do respect that. Dalton McGuinty, then Leader of the Opposition, said he was opposed to P3s, and I thought, "Okay." Even I, as a politician, believed him. Nobody believes politicians, but I believed him.

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The question about believing politicians is a very tricky one, because people out there say, "Come on. Politicians talking about other politicians not keeping their promises? Who are you kidding?" So it's true, they don't believe anyone. But how many broken promises must you achieve to be able to then be considered by the public as real mischievous types who distort the reality in ways such that you can then say, "I know they all distort the truth but, man, how many times can you do it over and over again until you say, 'I've had enough'?" I had enough. I believed Dalton when he said he was against the public-private partnerships. I believed him when he said, "We believe in public ownership and public financing." When he said that if elected, they would stop private sector financing of hospitals, I said, "Yes, I'm on his side." When he said he believed that public-private partnerships in health care would cost the province more money than the traditional arrangements, I said, "Yes, I believe Dalton," because we say the same thing as New Democrats.

No sooner do they get into power than they change the politics. Do you know what they did? Let me tell you what they did. They don't call it P3s any more, so all the Liberals smugly say, "We don't have P3s." They're all so smug about it: "We don't do P3s." And they're right. They're not doing P3s. They call them alternative financing procurement, and thus, therefore, consequently, it's different; it's not P3s. And they're right; it's not. Now it's alternative financing procurement. So the Liberals put a new name on it, a new colour, and they say, "No, it's not the same."

The Tories were honest about the whole thing, and the Liberals are so slippery. They are like reptiles that slither in front of you—

**The Acting Speaker:** Although there doesn't seem to be any complaint, I think the member has overstepped the bounds and I am requesting that that be withdrawn.

**Mr. Marchese:** I take back "reptiles." I do. How about, "They are reptilian in their approach to politics"?

**The Acting Speaker:** I think the honourable member should withdraw that phrase.

**Mr. Marchese:** "Reptilian in their politics"? You're getting too much advice from the Clerk, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Speaker is requesting that the statement be withdrawn.



**Mr. Marchese:** I withdraw it if it offends you, but I have said this in the Legislature many a time. I don't understand how it could offend some people.

So Liberals are the only ones who could distort the truth in the way that they do, and they get away with it over and over again.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm asking the member, please, withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Marchese:** I withdraw the statement that the Liberals distort the truth. I withdraw it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Marchese:** I tell you, it takes leadership to break a promise. It takes real leadership, and we have seen this over and over again from all the Liberals across the way, particularly Dalton. It takes fortitude, leadership, to be able to say one thing before the election and change it after the election. It takes a Minister of Health to be able to do it with heart and strength and vigour, and he does defend it with vigour. You see him here every day. He's got such a vigorous voice as he defends his policies and his broken promises.

I've got to tell you, you've got to love Liberals. You've got to love that middle way. That middle way means you never know what you're going to get. That's Liberal politics. It's the middle way, you understand. You never know what you're getting.

Talk about schedule D and the gradual removal of the capital tax. Have you ever known a corporation, including banks—it's not just about banks and insurance companies, but have you ever known a corporation or a bank to say, "We love that tax. We want to contribute to society. We think that we should pay a little bit"? Have you ever known a corporation to say, "We love that tax"? I don't know any corporation that says, "I want to make a contribution." Every corporation I know says, "I'm paying too much. We're paying too much. If you keep on taxing me, I'm just going to have to leave the country. I may even have to leave to another province, because we're overtaxed."

The Tories, God love them, oblige every banker, every corporate sector that comes and says, "We need to eliminate that tax." They've been obliging. They're very honest about it. They make no bones about it, God bless them. And the Liberals, they have no money, yet they introduce a health tax; and the Liberals, they have no money, yet they introduce a capital tax break that eventually means \$1.2 billion is lost from provincial coffers, because they don't have enough money. They're broke, and they introduce a health tax. They're broke, and they introduce this capital tax break that eventually is going to mean \$1.2 billion goes out of provincial coffers. I don't understand that.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** That's why you're over there.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's why I'm here and that's why George Smitherman, the Minister of Health, is there: the middle road, the middle way—we've got to help the poor, and we've got to help the wealthy. Even the wealthy need a tax break, and the poor, they get the

health tax, and they get whacked with the health tax. The Minister of Health is here, God bless him, and he defends it strongly. He defends the health tax on individuals who earn \$30,000 \$40,000, \$50,000, who pay \$400, \$500, \$600, some of them, when you get to the \$60,000 range. If you earn over \$100,000, all you pay is it \$900.

**Ms. Martel:** That's fair.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's fair. So the banker who's getting a capital tax break, God bless him, all he has to do is pay 900 bucks. The Liberals think it's fair.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Come on, be fair.

**Mr. Marchese:** I am fair. That's why I'm here, and you are there defending a capital tax break for the wealthy and defending a health tax for the middle class who have to pay more and more.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Explain your kilometres. Explain your travel budget then—

**Mr. Marchese:** Oh yes, George. You stand up, George, and make that speech about my mileage.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You drove to Kingston every night. You drove home to Kingston every night.

**Mr. Marchese:** Isn't that a funny thing? God love him. When Liberals get touchy, you notice—the Minister of Labour just got a bit—and I thought he was a bit appropriate. But when you touch George, you notice how you get to the personal? It's very fascinating. God love you, George. Listen, George, you've got 30 minutes to stand up and make a speech, and I hope you stand up and defend your policies, as you do so well in this place. It takes leadership to take away money from those who are poor.

Talk about housing. This government says that they have produced thousands and thousands of units for low-income earners. The Minister of Housing stands up and defends it. The Acting Premier, George Smitherman, stands up to defend it. They all hoo-hoo about how great they are. In 2003-04, cumulatively in those two, three years, if you include 2002 when the Tories were in there, all they've created is 63 units of public housing. Then, in 2004 and beyond, in 2005, we don't have any figures. Do you know why? The Liberals were so embarrassed by the record of not building any public housing that they stopped publishing the figures. So lo and behold, the Minister of Housing stands up and says, "Oh, no, we built thousands of public housing units." They're not there; it's just a claim. And do you know why we know? Because they don't publish the numbers. Do you know why they don't publish the numbers? Because they don't exist, because they are too embarrassed to publish the 2005 numbers. So they stand up here with the usual puffery and the usual hubris, expressed particularly by my good friend the Minister of Health, and they make all sorts of claims in this place. Stand up and defend the record and show it.

You got the member from Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge here talking about how great they've been in their educational policies. They talk about the peace and stability—that's all they can talk about is peace and



stability. They got an agreement with the teachers for four years, and that's keep them quiet for a long time.

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But it hasn't dealt with all the problems in the educational system. The member from Pickering-Ajax was a physical education teacher at one point. He doesn't know, and neither do his Liberal colleagues, and neither does the current minister nor the past one, that you've got 30% of the classrooms across Ontario who have physical education teachers. Yet what you've demanded of them is 20 more minutes of exercises from their regular classroom teacher. You've only got 30%—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-phone affairs):** You don't need a phys. ed teacher to do exercise.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, you do, Madame. If you want the knowledge that comes with physical education, you need a physical education teacher. You're not going to get it from the regular classroom. You might be able to jump up and down for 20 minutes; that's not physical education, I'm sorry—

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** You need both. You need day-to-day—

**Mr. Marchese:** So when you talk about what you've done and you talk about ESL—and I'm glad that my friend from Don Valley West is here, because she's well informed about these issues. When we talk about ESL, she knows, as a former trustee, about the needs of ESL students in Toronto, and she knows that the \$43 million that was given by the previous minister was used to balance the budget. She knows because she still has a lot of Liberal friends—trustees on the Toronto board. They know that that \$43 million was diverted from ESL to balance their budget. You've got so many students who come from all over the globe needing English-as-a-second-language support, and they're not getting it.

Member from Don Valley West, stand up and defend your policies. Minister of Health, stand up and defend your policies. We've got a Liberal government that's still using a Conservative funding formula that both the former Minister of Education and Dalton McGuinty said they were going to abolish. They were going to get rid of it. They were going to change it. They were going to get rid of the Conservative funding formula that they said was flawed, that the New Democrats agreed was flawed, that the member from Don Valley West agreed was flawed. They're still in that Conservative funding formula trap that gives not enough funding for ESL, not enough funding for special ed, not enough funding for transportation, not enough funding to keep small schools open, not enough funding for music teachers and physical education teachers and guidance teachers and caretakers, and on and on.

That's what the member from Pickering-Ajax is proud of. All they can talk about is, "We've got peace and stability." The member from Don Valley West keeps on repeating the same mantra: "We've got peace and stability." Yet we have deficiencies in the system that are not

being dealt with. The same problems recur under this Liberal government as we had under the Tories, yet their claim is, "Every day we're spending more and more."

**Ms. Wynne:** Two billion dollars more, Rosario. Come on, \$2 billion—

**Mr. Marchese:** If the member from Don Valley West will remember, the Tories used to make the same claim. They used to say "We're spending \$2 billion more." The member from Don Valley West says, "We're spending \$2 billion." If you're spending \$2 billion, then everything should be okay.

**Ms. Wynne:** It's not all fixed.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's not, and I'm pointing out where it's not fixed. I am pointing out where it's not fixed. The special education is not fixed.

The point I wanted to make about special ed, just a brief one, is on autism. This government is so proud—the former minister, the other former minister that's here, now the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. We've got a real problem. They make a claim that they're spending \$30 million more. If you ask them, they'll probably say they're spending more on that. What this money is doing is the following: It's going to private agencies out there, hiring consultants. Some of them may be teachers; many of them are not. We don't know how qualified they may be, let's just assume they are, but a lot of these consultants that give support to autism are not in the classroom. They do not teach; they cannot teach. They're only there to provide advice to those who are on the front lines in the schools trying to provide the intensive behaviour intervention modalities, and there's not enough money and not enough support. That's what these people do.

The claim from the government is, "We're providing more and more," yet the member from Nickel Belt says that in 2003-04 that very ministry gave back \$36 million, money that could have been used for intensive behavioural intervention programs. It's gone back into the consolidated revenue fund. In 2004-05, \$21 million was sent back, money that students suffering from special education needs are not getting.

That's the kind of government we've got. This is the kind of government the member from Don Valley West is all proud of, that the Minister of Health is so proud of. They boast about how great they are. This is a government of broken promises, nothing more. Yes, they threw in a couple of dollars, but that's about all they have done. They're known for broken promises, no more.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** I'm pleased to rise this evening to join tonight's discussion with respect to the 2006 budget bill, Bill 81. As well, I'll speak to the issue around why we need to time-allocate this bill, because of the very important work this bill will do for Ontarians and certainly for individuals in my community.

I know it's breaking with the tradition of the Conservatives by delivering the budget in the Legislature, which is something different, something our minister certainly



had the respect for Ontarians and this Legislature to do. It's also going to break with the tradition of the NDP in terms of our direction in reducing the deficit, unlike the NDP who ran deficits in the neighbourhood of \$10 billion yearly and really had no accountability for public money and no plan to put Ontarians on a solid footing.

We have a plan for the province to improve our health care, education and infrastructure, to balance our budget and to improve provincial services. So I want to talk about the importance of passing this budget bill and highlight some of the benefits, both provincially and to my community of Sault Ste. Marie.

With respect to health care, our health care minister, Minister Smitherman, is leading our health care transformation, and doing a fantastic job. We're certainly seeing the benefits of that in Sault Ste. Marie.

Let me just talk for a few minutes about this transformation. What this means to Ontarians is putting resources into community health care services, taking the pressure off our hospitals. For too long, our hospitals have been burdened with providing services they were really not designed to provide, not prepared to provide. In 2003, when I was elected, we had over 60 individuals in long-term-care beds in our hospital in Sault Ste. Marie, and that's certainly not the case today. This means a greater investment for public health; we're going from 50% to 75% for public health. This means infusions of cash for mental health, which for about a decade had not seen any increases to their base budget.

It also means significant resources to home care. In 2003, I recall the phone at the constituency office ringing steadily, with individuals saying, "I can't get care for my mother or father. If I can't get this care, they're going to be in the hospital." With the very first funding announcement injecting funds into home care, in Sault Ste. Marie we saw \$1.4 million in new funding. What this meant was 20 new individuals were hired in the community care access centre, and the waiting list began to dry up. So this was fantastic news in Sault Ste. Marie. Again, I want to highlight the home care funding announcement today that saw a \$1.5-million increase to the Algoma Community Care Access Centre to provide very important home care services to people in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma.

As well, supportive housing increases: The Ontario Finnish Rest Home in Sault Ste. Marie saw a \$300,000 increase to their base budget. We know that providing health care and having people in our hospital at about \$800 a day is far more expensive than providing these services in the community, where individuals want them and where taxpayers can better afford them. That is part of the key focus around our health care transformation, and that's what this budget does.

## 2020

We've also benchmarked, with our wait time strategy, five important areas: cancer treatment and surgeries, cardiac, cataract, hip and knee, and MRI and CT scans. These five areas are critical in the delivery of quality health care services to the people of Ontario. Prior to our government coming to office, we really had no idea

where we stood across the province and what different hospitals were capable of delivering. We made this process transparent for Ontarians to log on to the provincial website and see for themselves where each hospital stands in terms of delivering each one of these very vital services. Dr. Alan Hudson is leading the charge on the wait times strategy. We're certainly seeing results in Sault Ste. Marie. It's very transparent, and it's something that we're definitely proud of.

Multi-year and stable funding for our hospital: The Sault Area Hospital will see over \$300 million over the next three years in historic multi-year funding, something that the Ontario Hospital Association has been clamouring for for years. Until we came to office, that hadn't happened, so it's definitely a step in the right direction.

When it comes to physician supply, this is an area that has been neglected and overlooked by past governments. It's something we're making a concerted effort to address. We know that in 2003 there were about a million Ontarians who said they didn't have a family doctor. When it comes to international medical graduates, we've taken the spaces from 90 to 200, we've increased medical school enrolment by 15%, and we've also added 56 new seats at the Northern Ontario Medical School with an investment of about \$95 million. It's the first medical school to be built in Canada in more than 30 years, and it was built in northern Ontario. I'm certainly proud to say that there are four individuals from Sault Ste. Marie enrolled in the Northern Ontario Medical School and I'm hopeful that they'll return to Sault Ste. Marie to practise medicine.

This is very different than the steps past governments took in terms of neglecting physician supply and certainly the disastrous effects the NDP had when it came to dealing with medical school enrolment: cutting those seats in medical schools and cutting graduate programs across the board. Extremely irresponsible; I know it certainly hurt our community in Sault Ste. Marie.

When it comes to nursing, we're talking about increasing full-time nurses from 51% to 60%. We're making progress. We have over 4,000 new nurses working in Ontario. We've increased the clinical training spaces for nurses from 75 to 150, and we've also provided greater funding for graduate education. As we enter nurses' week, we have much to be proud of in terms of our results when it comes to increasing the number of nurses in Ontario and respecting the services that they provide for the people of Ontario.

As part of our budgetary planning, we also have 150 new family health teams and \$600 million toward these family health teams. We're making considerable progress. I'm also proud to say that this has been modeled after the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, which is one of the oldest in the country when it comes to a family health team model. It's won all kinds of national and provincial awards. Our government has supported this centre and has worked to see that this model is developed and rolled out throughout the province. For nearly five years, the Group Health Centre, under the past



government, didn't have a contract. We took it very seriously and made sure that the Group Health Centre now has a new contract worth \$26 million—and I should say they're very happy with that contract—to provide the services that are vital to individuals in the Soo and area. They have about 58,000 rostered patients at this centre. We also provided \$1.6 million for an expansion at the centre and about \$750,000 for an important program for vascular research intervention. Many residents in the Soo and area are benefiting from this.

We also created the new Ministry of Health Promotion to invest in prevention. I want to commend Minister Watson for his leadership with this ministry in raising the awareness of health issues across the province. This is an investment in Ontarians' health and it's something that's going to help us reduce our health care costs over time.

I also want to talk just for a moment about our new hospitals. The member from Nickel Belt had indicated that there are 11 hospitals moving forward. I just want to say I'm proud that Sault Ste. Marie is moving forward. Finally, a new hospital in Sault Ste. Marie, after years of neglect. I know the member from Nipissing, another northern caucus colleague, has also worked very hard to ensure that her hospital is moving forward. I know the community of North Bay is very excited about that hospital as well.

When it comes to traditional procurement projects, we can talk about some of the horrendous examples: the situation in Sudbury that was \$100 million over budget; the Thunder Bay hospital that was well over \$100 million over budget. The member from Nickel Belt criticizes the AFP process, but I don't recall any hospitals being built on the NDP's watch. We've committed to ensure that these hospitals are publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly operated, and that's exactly what they'll be.

We also want to ensure that the consortium maintains this facility for the life of it and ensures that if the window seals go or the HVAC system fails, they're going to be there to make sure that's in good repair and Ontario taxpayers are not going to have to dig into their pockets yet again and come good for the maintenance costs on these facilities. The other thing with respect to the AFP is if there are cost overruns, the consortium has signed a contract for a fixed price to deliver this project, and they're required to do that at that cost. If there are overruns, they're going to have to bear those costs. We're very confident, in moving forward with this process, that Ontario taxpayers are going to get value for money and that these contracts are going to be very transparent.

With respect to education, we heard the member from Trinity-Spadina talk about education issues. You'll recall the Rozanski report that recommended several billion dollars be put back into the education system. I'm very pleased to say that we're exceeding those recommendations and putting a greater financial commitment behind our young people in this province. We've committed to reducing class sizes. That is happening. We have over 4,000 new teachers working in the province of Ontario. We've introduced the Literacy and Numeracy

Secretariat. We've trained over 15,000 new teachers in this regard. We've included new funding for libraries. One of the most important things that we've done with education is we have labour peace: four-year contracts, the longest contracts settled among the teachers' federations in the province of Ontario, to ensure we can deliver all of those good results for the young people and the students in the province of Ontario. When it comes to post-secondary education funding, \$6.2 billion in historic funding for post-secondary education. So we've made some significant strides both in health care and in education.

In Sault Ste. Marie, this budget means more money for roads and infrastructure, more money for our health unit, greater funding for gas tax. We've seen \$1.2 million in COMRIF funding just recently. I have to say that funding in Sault Ste. Marie and the support that our government has provided has been really remarkable in the last couple of years, compared to the disastrous representation that we had by the NDP in Sault Ste. Marie.

I also want to put on the record one other item. The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka referenced four-year municipal terms and spoke against this issue. I want to clarify this issue with respect to our community of Sault Ste. Marie. There was a resolution passed at our city council meeting. It says, "Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario is considering the matter of four-year terms of office for municipal council members, and has conducted a survey of elected officials from across the province with results indicating that 80% of respondents were in favour of four-year terms...." It goes on, and there are several other paragraphs. I see the whip giving me the hook, so I'm going to get on with it: "Therefore be it resolved that the Sault Ste. Marie city council petition the province of Ontario to amend the Municipal Elections Act to provide for four-year terms of office for municipal councils and that the first four-year term commence following the November 2006 election." Our community is certainly behind it. I think it's much like what's done in Nova Scotia and Manitoba and several other provinces in this country. I think that's my time for this evening.

**2030**

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** I'm going to try to say "Nepean-Carleton" more than he said "Sault Ste. Marie."

It's appropriate tonight that we're going to be speaking to the Budget Measures Act on the eve of the federal government's first Conservative budget. The contrast, of course, is going to be most severe. On the one hand—I'll say my right hand—we'll have a government that, in its first 90 days, has been lauded for doing what it said it would do, exercising a Conservative credo, "A promise made is a promise kept." On the other hand, the left hand, we have this Liberal government that, now into its the third budget, almost 900 days later, has increased its promise-breaking capability by 43 new commitments we're not sure they can keep. In the days ahead, we will no doubt see more stark contrasts.



I look at my own riding of Nepean–Carleton. It's a diverse suburban riding with a distinct rural flair. Soccer moms like Karla McChesney and farmers like Brett and Andrea Taylor in Nepean–Carleton all teach their children how to keep their word. By the provincial government, these constituents of mine were promised no new taxes. They were promised the deficit would be eliminated. They were promised that the Ministry of Agriculture would be a lead ministry. My constituents are waiting for these promises to be honoured, for their government to keep their word.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. MacLeod:** Instead, this budget saw no relief from an illegitimate health tax imposed on young families—I can understand why the minister might want to overspeak me on this one—like Jared and Andrea Steinbaker. These young families can't take this illegitimate health tax.

This budget was crafted to purposely spend Ontario into deficit, despite a promise to take us into the red, and \$244 million was removed from the Ministry of Agriculture, a so-called lead ministry to the Liberal Party.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Wrong.

**Ms. MacLeod:** You can check your own promises.

It's disheartening to see that this budget in its entirety does not live up to the promise of its makers, but that's not all. It's somewhat disconcerting to acknowledge in this place that some of the elements of this budget bill have been shrouded in secrecy. Take, for example, the changes to municipal terms. Why do these changes from three- to four-year terms appear in the budget when many of us understand that there will be changes to the Municipal Act forthcoming? Would it not be reasonable to expect that this change would be more appropriately made in the act that governs municipalities rather than in the province's budget bill? Where is it? It's sandwiched between schedule G, the Ministry of Natural Resources Act, and schedule I, the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corporation Act. I spoke with Councillor Jan Harder today, a former boss of mine, who told my office that there was no burning desire in the city of Ottawa to have these amendment changes.

So why here? Why now? We understand that the government is in the process of making changes to the Municipal Act in time for the newly elected councils. I think this answers the minister's own questions. This is where a major amendment such as this belongs, with all the other changes the government is considering.

On April 26, my colleague Tim Hudak indicated that at a ROMA conference in February the Premier announced that his intention was to extend the term for municipal councils and school boards from three to four years, to the surprise of many municipal councillors. I'd like to know why, from this government's standpoint, it didn't feel obliged to include these sweeping changes within the Municipal Act and instead opted to quietly usher it through a budget that has bigger ticket items that create a bigger stir? The real issue here now, in my mind,

is not how long the terms are; rather it is, what are they trying to hide over there?

In their media release on the budget, AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, clearly expresses its concerns. They said, "Ontario's municipalities have waited patiently while the province got its fiscal house in order and the Premier has said he's now ready to work with us to restore sustainable municipal finance to Ontario. This budget does not embrace that commitment."

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Oh.

**Ms. MacLeod:** That's their quote not mine. You can check it out.

With a budget mired in broken promises, it can now be said too that elements of this budget are veiled in secrecy. When was the consultation? When were the public hearings? There were no consultations. There were no public hearings. Instead, the Premier blurts out that he intends to increase municipal council and school board office terms.

As I said in my maiden speech, this budget is just another example of a party that has never been able to find its way out of a hole it dug for itself in public policy during a bitter-fought campaign in 2003. In its desperate attempt to form government, this government's front bench made promises and said anything it could to win. It promised the moon, it promised the stars: a series of promises that it never really intended to keep.

This budget, whether it is the broken promises to soccer moms and farmers or its haphazard way of changing municipal terms, is indicative of the public policy void that has encumbered this government.

I think it's time that the members opposite were more reflective of the changes that really are required within the Municipal Act, and that's where changes to the terms are more appropriately reflected.

**Mr. Lalonde:** I'm delighted to be able to speak on this bill, which is very important. Let me tell you, if the opposition would agree to passing this bill as soon as possible, because it is urgent—this budget bill covers 16 different acts, and without having this bill approved by this assembly, we won't be able to proceed. It includes the Business Corporations Act, the Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario Act, the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Gasoline Tax Act, the Income Tax Act, the Ministry of Natural Resources Act and the Municipal Elections Act. My friend from Nepean–Carleton just mentioned that we should probably have a separate Municipal Act bill, but the way this is going, we wouldn't be able to get this through before the election comes because the opposition is trying to stall it. We also have schedule I, the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corporation Act, schedule J, the Ontario Loan Act, the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Review Act, the Public Service Pension Act, the Retail Sales Tax Act, the St. Clair Parks Commission Act, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation Act, the Tobacco Tax Act and



the Vital Statistics Act. There are 16 different acts involved in this budget bill.

The people of this province have been telling us that this is the best budget they have seen in the last 10 years. We haven't gone through any downloading like the previous government did in 1998. In just my own area of Prescott and Russell, not including Glengarry, we had a shortfall with the previous government's downloading of \$23 million, which became an average of a \$381 per household increase in the united counties of Prescott and Russell. What the previous government has done—and today they're trying to stall the passing of this bill.

Let me give you just a few items here. Social housing: When I look at the city of Toronto—and the opposition just said that since 2004 we have only allocated 65 units in total. I believe he has to go back and look at it, because just in the united counties of Prescott and Russell we received 25. That is a small county compared to the city of Toronto. When I look at ambulance services, \$2.1 million was downloaded to the municipality. Social housing: \$4.9 million was downloaded. The police service: \$10.3 million was downloaded to the united counties of Prescott and Russell.

There's another thing. We keep talking about MPAC. MPAC is responsible for assessments. Who made the mistake? The previous government. In the past, it used to cost an average of \$31 per unit to the province. All this was downloaded to the municipalities. It came up to \$45 per unit. Just last month we received a notice from MPAC saying it's going to be around \$33 per unit, which is going to be charged to all the municipalities. That used to be all done by the province.

The inspection of septic tanks used to be done by the province. Now it is downloaded to the municipalities.

The previous government reduced the personal income tax, but by doing so they cut some services. The McGuinty government said, "We are not going to reduce taxes and we are not going to balance our budget because we don't want to cut any services to the Ontario population." This is the only way. It's because we've been listening to the people; we have consulted. The standing committee on finance went around the province listening to what the people had to say. The McGuinty government says no. We want to make sure that the people of this province enjoy living in Ontario, and we have to look at the future of our province: the young people. We don't want to put a mortgage on those young people that they will have to pay in the future.

2040

When I look at what the city of Toronto received in last year's budget—just this afternoon, a gentleman came and made a deputation to the standing committee on general government on Bill 53. When I look at the municipal taxes in Toronto—that person was complaining about the cost of municipal taxes. The city of Toronto's budget is a little over \$6.6 billion. Do you know how much money the McGuinty government is going to give back to the city of Toronto? It's going to give back \$1.98 billion to Toronto, because we do recognize that the city

of Toronto is the backbone of the province. There are over 4.2 million people living in the GTA area. We know that is where the business comes from, and that this is really where most of the economy of this beautiful province is.

The city of Toronto has received over \$600 million for the transit system in Toronto. We have given to the city of Toronto and the rest of the province \$1.2 billion for public transportation. The former government couldn't have done it because they reduced taxes, so they downloaded all the roads that we used to have in the rural sector; over 4,800 kilometres of roads were downloaded.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** Upload them.

**Mr. Lalonde:** I see my friend from Lanark-Carleton. I've never forgotten that during Good Roads he came up to see the Minister of Transportation and was after our government to upload the roads that were transferred to the municipality. Who made the mistake before? You made it. Today, we can't just take it back. You cut personal taxes, so we don't get that revenue back. You would like to see it back; you made a mistake. You were Minister of Transportation in the past, and you should have known that we should never have transferred those 4,800 kilometres of road. Over 40% of those roads that were downloaded were from eastern Ontario, and today we're paying a big amount for that.

In 2006, the city of Toronto will also receive \$130.4 million in the gas tax. Did the former government ever do that? Never.

We will also give the city of Toronto \$1 million, through Move Ontario, towards an environmental assessment.

We will also give the city of Toronto an additional amount of \$10.4 million towards ambulances. Ambulances in Ontario used to be handled 100% by the province. They downloaded everything. They said, "After a while, we will download 100%." We said, "No, it's impossible." Finally, they said, "You're only getting 50%." It ended up being only 28% or 30% that the province was paying. Today, we have guaranteed that in the next three years the municipalities will receive a minimum 50% grant from this province. So we are taking care of municipalities in Ontario.

I'm looking at this again: Out of a \$10-million rent bank program, the city of Toronto has been allocated \$2.7 million to set up and run a rent bank. Last year, the city of Toronto received \$91 million of gas tax. That is on top of the \$130.4 million that they will be receiving today.

We are proud of the McGuinty government because we are taking care of the future of this province. At present, we know we are paying a little over \$7.6 billion in interest, but when we look at the amount of debt that the previous government had left us with, especially during the year when they said, "We have balanced the budget," all of a sudden we found that there was a \$5.6-billion deficit. This is why we had to come up with some different programs.

I'm asking both the opposition parties to pass this bill as soon as possible so we can proceed with the proper



procedure and have the act in place to allow the municipalities to get rolling for the next election, which will be a four-year term.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I'm just amazed to see the last speaker. We've been complaining about rural Ontario not being looked after, and the last speaker, from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, one of our rural ridings, wants to give all the money to Toronto. No wonder we're having trouble in rural Ontario. What are the other rural members over there doing? Are they giving all our money to Toronto too? I can't believe this. The rural members want to give all the money to Toronto; no wonder we're having problems.

What are we actually debating tonight? It's a time allocation motion on Bill 81. I didn't think this government was going to do things like that again. Rosario from the NDP, I guess we got fooled again. It was another one of those promises that they weren't going to do things like that. I can remember them standing over here, where they're going to be in another year, saying, "You can't do things like that. You're bringing bills to a head and we want to debate them."

Well, let's talk about the debate we had on the four-year term. Where was the debate on the four-year term? No, you slid that in here. When the minister before was talking about them being slithery, that was very true. A slithery bunch like I haven't seen before slid in this four-year term. I'm not saying that the four-year term is wrong, but we haven't had a chance to debate it. The people out there have had no chance to debate it, and you're slithering it in on a bill that has to do with finances. What kind of government have we got here? First of all, our rural members want to give all our money to Toronto. Second, they slide in a four-year term under the table so nobody gets a chance to debate it.

I know that a lot of politicians and municipal politicians had a chance; there's nothing wrong with that. AMO did their study and it was about 50-50. I actually did a study of the politicians in my own riding and it was about 50-50. But what about the people we're supposed to represent in this place? They didn't get a chance to say anything about this.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Why didn't you ask them?

**Mr. Murdoch:** Because you're slithering it under the table, that's why. You want to know why we haven't? Because you guys don't want us to have a debate on it. The Liberals don't want to debate anything that might be controversial. How could you say that? They've told us so many different things in this House, and can you believe them?

**Mr. Dunlop:** There's a nomination for mayor of Toronto.

**Mr. Murdoch:** I guess that would be something we could do. Well, we can do anything we want in this House, because the Liberals pull a stunt like this tonight. They want to nominate Jean-Marc Lalonde for mayor of Toronto. I just don't think he'd win that. He's always done a great job for his riding, there's no doubt. But he gave the pot to Toronto tonight; I can't believe that. He

might even be a Toronto Maple Leaf fan, for all I know. I'm getting a little worried about that.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** I agree. When you tell somebody they are a Toronto Maple Leaf fan, that is pretty personal; I understand that. But maybe Jean-Marc wants to do something for the Leafs. They certainly could use some money to do something. We've seen what happened to them.

**2050**

But for things like that to happen—we're actually tonight debating closure on a budget. No more debate, this is it, folks. You're not going to get a chance to go out and say, "Do you want the four-year term or don't you?" That's what the people would like to have a chance to do. But this government said, "No, no, we're going to slide that under. We're not even going to debate it." This is the first chance we've had to even debate that, because you slid it under a finance bill. You know the opposition are not going to support one of your finance bills. You didn't come near balancing a budget yet and you've been in three years—never balanced a budget yet.

I know the Minister of Health is going to say, "You left us this big deficit." You know something? That was halfway through the year. You could have balanced it that year. If you had any sense, any leadership over there, you would have balanced it that year, but no, "We're going to blame it on the other guys," and you can get away with that for a year. But you're still trying to get away with it. This is three years now, folks. You can't even balance a budget and you've been in for three years. You had some money. You could have done it if you wanted to. But, "Hey, we're going to spend the money. We're going to buy everybody's votes if we can." That's what they wanted to do—and, of course, higher taxes. I heard somebody say that this was a wonderful province. It is a wonderful province, but the highest-taxed province. Why? Because you've got Liberals in the place. Liberals love taxes. Liberals say "more taxes, more money that we can go out and give away to buy votes." Unfortunately, they forgot about rural Ontario. They're dumping it all into Toronto. They forgot about our agriculture people and took money out of their budget for agriculture.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** I would like to say that the Minister of Health actually wants to get into this debate. I'm sure he will in the next session; I think they have a few minutes left. I think he's using some threatening gestures. Because he's a bit overweight right now—and you probably can't say that—I don't think he could catch me right now. That's something he'll have to deal—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** Oh, there's that lady from up there yelling. What are you saying? Do you want to get in on the debate, too? You certainly can.

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** Yes, I'd like to get in on debate.

**Mr. Murdoch:** Well, that's good. You're going to debate. You've got about eight minutes left. We'll certainly look to hear from you.



They brag about COMRIF. What happened to all the money? We don't know where it went. It certainly didn't come up to our area. You're always bragging about how you're going to help fix the water and sewers. In our area we got roads. That's where the money went, unfortunately. Maybe it should have gone to water and sewers. We'll certainly do the roads if they put the little bit of money we did get in Bruce and Grey. But only two of my municipalities got any money up there from COMRIF. You can't brag about that, boys and girls. You can't brag about COMRIF, because it didn't go anywhere this time. Unfortunately, you fell flat on your face in that one.

The Minister of Natural Resources is here tonight. What did you do for him? Nothing. He needs conservation officers out in the field, and has no money in his budget for those people. There's more retiring every day and none are being put back. I'm putting a plug in to anybody over there that would like to listen. The Ministry of Natural Resources certainly needs an uplift in their budget because they didn't get anything in this budget.

Instead of balancing your budget, you want to throw it away and give to it the people, back to the people: "Go and spend it." They're going to catch up with you on that one. Eventually you're going to have to try to balance the budget. You've got one year left to do that. We'll see what happens with you when you get around to your next budget. It's election year and it will be a little different than the one we just had. I'm sure you'll try to balance it then.

But the whole problem has been that you forgot about rural Ontario and northern Ontario. You totally forgot about us. Now I understand why, after some of the speeches from some of the members tonight. Even all the member from Sault Ste. Marie could talk about what happened in the past. He doesn't even know he's in the future yet. He's got to realize that he is government, and has been government for three years. But all he wanted to talk about was the past. That's got nothing to do with it now, folks. You've got to get on with it and start to figure out that you're in government. As soon as you find that out, then maybe you can bring up a better budget.

A terrible budget, a terrible thing you've done on the four-year without any discussion with the public. You may have thought—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** That's fine. I hear the Minister of Natural Resources. He's going to speak too, hopefully. I mean, he has a lot to say now. I'm sure we'll hear from him in their eight minutes.

There has been no debate on the four-year term. I'm not saying it won't work; I'm not saying that it's bad. But I think the people we represent in this place should have had a chance to debate that. It should have gone to the people. It should have been out there for them to say, "Yes, I think that would be good," or "No, it wouldn't." You didn't want to do that. It's sort of a Liberal trick: "Let's sneak it in under the table and we'll get it through," and that's the end of it, folks; it's already there.

I just want to finish off by saying that I heard someone over there say it's one of the best budgets they've seen in 10 years. I don't know where they've been.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** No, it couldn't have been him.

**Mr. Dunlop:** That was the member from Toronto, Jean-Marc Lalonde.

**Mr. Murdoch:** I don't think he'd say that. It was bad enough giving all the money to Toronto.

**Mr. Dunlop:** He said it was the best budget.

**Mr. Murdoch:** Oh, gee, I just feel bad for Jean-Marc. He must have had a weak moment somewhere along the line. I know he does a good job in his own riding, but when they find out he wants to give everything to Toronto, I think he's in a bit of trouble. It might have a bit to do with his hockey years; I'm not sure. I think he's probably feeling sorry for the Toronto Maple Leafs. We all feel a little sorry for them.

I'm speaking on one of the worst budgets I've seen in 15 years—16 years, actually. It's probably the worst budget—you know, it's worse than the NDP budgets. They didn't have any money. They did the best they could. It wasn't what we wanted. But I want to tell you, they had some money. They could have balanced their budget. But no, they just wanted to waste the money and spend it. They didn't spend it in rural Ontario, that's for sure.

So I am disappointed in this government. We will not be supporting this bill. I can see what they'll say the next time it comes up: "Oh, you didn't support the four-year term." Well, you snuck it in there, folks. If you had put it in an amendment to the municipal affairs budget, then maybe we would have supported that. But you had to put it in with your budget, which you know no right-thinking person would support. I will rest on that and say that unfortunately we won't be able to support this bill.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I think all of us enjoyed some of the levity of the last speaker, but there's a serious side to what we're talking about tonight. We're talking about passage of Bill 81. We're talking about moving forward on the government's agenda and the need to do that. I think the serious point is the fact why many of us on this side of the House got involved in politics, and the collective amnesia that we've heard from the opposition benches, especially the Conservatives. The fact of the matter is, we saw eight years of government in this province which were outrageous, outrageous in their approach to so many things.

Let's start with respect for the Legislature. My friend Mr. Murdoch dares to stand up and criticize us on the issue of time allocation? Let me read some statistics into the record. Our government has introduced 90 government bills. We've passed 68 bills and only allocated 12. We have time-allocated fewer bills than any government since 1990, and considerably fewer than the Tories.

Do you know what? Members of this Legislature and people at home may be asking themselves, how many did the Conservatives time-allocate? Well, we did 12. So did they do twice as many, 24?

**Interjections:** No.



**Mr. Milloy:** How about three times as many, 36?

**Interjections:** No.

**Mr. Milloy:** How about four times as many, 48?

**Interjections:** No.

**Mr. Milloy:** I could keep going. What about double that? Did they do 96? No, 102 were time-allocated. Percentage-wise, we time-allocated 10% of our bills. The Tories time-allocated almost 50% of their bills that received royal assent. And that's not all. During the Eves government, the PCs used time allocation motions on 75% of the bills they passed.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Milloy:** Now, the chief government whip asks about committee time. In 2003, the PC government allowed for no committee time and no third reading debate when using time allocation motions.

2100

But it's about more than time allocation. I had the pleasure this morning of talking to the head of my local community care access centre, home care. I called him because of the announcement that was made today by the Minister of Health about an increase in their spending of 6.6%. In the course of the conversation, we started talking about the first meeting I ever had with him as a newly elected MPP, when the executive director and the board chair came and talked about what it had been like during the last few years in terms of the cuts that had been brought in by the Conservatives. They said, "We want to do our best. We want to work with the budget that's given us. What we ask is that if you as a government bring forth further cuts, you give us some notice on them so we can adjust the level of service." This was after a campaign where I had heard from voter after voter about elderly parents, about relatives they were concerned about because their home care services that they relied upon were being cut month after month after month because of the Conservative cutbacks.

When you think about what that government did in power, it's interesting to do a little compare-and-contrast. In 1995, they came to power and inherited a large deficit from our friends in the New Democratic Party. In 2003, we came to power and we inherited a large deficit from our friends in the Conservative Party. What did we do? We acted responsibly, because we had been elected to deliver services to the people of Ontario. We took a fair approach, a balanced approach, and began to rebuild those services. What did they do? First of all, they went to the health care system and cut \$550 million from our hospitals. They went to our colleges and universities in their first and second years in office and cut \$435.5 million. Do you remember that famous, famous promise that we all like to think about? "We will not close any hospitals," Mr. Harris said. So what did he do? He closed 28 hospitals. That's the sort of legacy that government left to us.

Let's compare it with our budget, a budget that focused on health care, a budget that focused on education and a budget that focused on strong communities. What have we delivered? Go to our schools. I told this story the other night, and it's worth repeating. I visited a

program for troubled youth in our community that has had a tremendous success rate. Do you know what they did? They showed me a video of a news clip from several years ago, I think from around 2001 or 2002, and it was a news story about a board meeting where the board was on the verge of closing this program, this program that had taken youth who were on the verge of leaving high school and turned them around in a year. Many had gone on to become professionals, earning a living in the community, raising families. This news clip was of a board that was saying that due to the Conservative cutbacks they were going to have to close the program.

That's the type of atmosphere we lived in, where these programs were being closed, where I was going to schools and hearing how parents were having to raise money in order to get library books. I went to visit my old elementary school, and a book they had just thrown out was entitled *Some Day Man Will Visit the Moon*, because they didn't have any money for them. I went to my old elementary school—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Simcoe-Grey, please. It's getting just a little—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, the member from Simcoe North. Yes, you're right. But you know that it's you, and you're pretty loud. Please continue.

**Mr. Milloy:** I went to my old elementary school, where I started in 1970; this was in 2003. They said, "Do you recognize the carpet? It hasn't been changed in those 33 years." Now we go to our schools and what do we see? We see teachers and students who are happy. We have a period of peace and stability. We also see a situation where we have more textbooks, where we have library books, where we have specialty teachers where we have smaller classrooms.

We talk about our health care system. I talk about today's investment in home care. I talk about an investment Friday, which I was proud to make, of some \$11.7 million going into the three local hospitals in my riding to reduce wait times. I talk about the creation of four family health teams in my community. I talk about the new spirit of co-operation and optimism that exists there. We talk about what's going on in our communities in the investments of infrastructure: \$19 million which went to Waterloo region in the last budget. We talk about some of the major infrastructure projects on our highways that are going on in my community in terms of Highway 401, in terms of Highway 8. We talk about the post-secondary sector, which they slashed. We talk about the hundreds of millions of dollars going into my community, with two outstanding universities and a community college.

Let's not have selective amnesia in this Legislature. Let's think about the outrageous eight years that brought so many of us to the Legislature, and the work that we're doing to turn it around. We need to pass this bill. We need to get on with this budget.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I've been listening to the debate this evening. I perhaps may not be



quite as vocal as most of the speakers tonight, or as loud, but I certainly wish to put on the record some concerns I have. At the outset, let me just say that this is the 22nd budget I've had the privilege of speaking to in this Legislature. I've said this many times: to specifically condemn a budget for its entire content would be wrong. There are good things in every budget. That's just a fact. There are very good things in this budget, like the support for diabetic children and the support for insulin pumps. It's something I spoke to when we were in government and we've lobbied for in opposition. A private member's bill precipitated a response, and this government has acted. I, for one, wish to put on the record some areas of strong concern for my community, but at the outset I would be hard-pressed to condemn absolutely everything in any given budget in any given government in this province. And I dare say that probably applies federally as well.

For the constituents of mine in Burlington, we want to put some specific concerns on the record. It's been established in this budgetary debate that the government found itself with \$2.2 billion of unanticipated additional revenue, about \$700 million of additional revenue because of lower interest rates. There were many opportunities afforded this government which would allow them to honour more of their election promises or to prioritize the growing needs of the citizens of Ontario and to respond accordingly. So the budget becomes in many respects an imprint of the priorities of the given government and an extension of their belief system and their conscience as it relates to each of the citizens of Ontario.

I make no apologies for my interest in and my focus on vulnerable persons in this province and what this budget will mean to them. The good news, of course, is that social assistance rates are going to go up by 2%. This could have happened at the beginning of this mandate. It took three years, but needless to say, there was an increase—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, that's the second increase.

**Mr. Jackson:** Fair enough. I stand corrected. I thank the Minister of Health. He's correct; it's the second increase. However, there are a whole series of vulnerable children who were not addressed in this budget, and I'm going to highlight a few of those.

At the outset, I want to talk about the Halton public school board and education in general. It's clear that there's a growing chorus of individuals expressing concern about the departure of the Minister of Education. After three years, we had hoped that we would have a revised funding formula that was promised. We were hopeful that we would receive a proper capital program and commitment. That has not been forthcoming. We were hoping to see additional supports that were promised. There's a moratorium on school closures, and yet school boards are continuing to close schools because financially they are left with no option. Therefore, the government's failure to respond and to act is forcing school boards to make decisions which they were led to believe, in the last election, they would not have to make.

2110

We have to look no further than those six boards in the GTA that are experiencing extraordinary growth pressures.

There are only 70-some school boards in the province, but there are six high-growth-impact boards, and Halton is certainly one of them. The Halton public board has currently \$100 million worth of new construction which they are forced to do, because if they don't they will be busing more and more kids, and we don't any longer pay for busing the way we used to in this province. As such, it's terrible for the students, for a variety of reasons. The number of portables is growing at an alarming rate. This affects not only the public board but also the separate school board, which has at least three schools that they need to put a shovel in this spring. Yet there's no indication in this budget that the government is going to be proceeding in any timely fashion.

The fact is that there is over \$1 billion worth of construction currently going on in Ontario for schools in the GTA that this government has not given them permission to do. They've stuck their neck out in the hope that they will be able to collect additional revenue in the future, but failure for that money to come soon will put school boards further and further into deficit positions. Both the Halton public and the Halton separate school boards are projecting deficits again this year, and the situation will get worse next year.

The second area I want to talk about is my profound disappointment that the government has seen fit to again turn its back on children with autism. As someone who sat at a cabinet table when a higher court decision came down about deaf services, I just want to say that we were in a position to say, "Shall we fight this or shall we be compliant and put our investment in that?" The decision that was made by our government was very clear: that each minister was required to go through their ministry to check the court ruling and to be compliant with deaf services. Quite frankly, now that we have a court ruling on autism services, in my view the most responsible thing for the government to do would be to invest those millions of dollars into programming for children and access to autistic services as opposed to investing them—I use that word facetiously—instead of wasting that money on lawyers' fees for a court challenge that, I agree with my colleague from Sudbury, I'm quite hopeful the government loses.

This is an issue that is growing in its importance and growing as a crisis. Today I received two more phone calls from families in my riding that are on a one-year waiting list just for testing. The fear and apprehension: More and more families who have money are going out and paying for this test. More and more families who are finding out about it, realizing that they would be put on a waiting list indefinitely, are going out and spending the money. That angers me because the promise of a public education is that you shouldn't have to have a large wallet to ensure that your children are getting quality education. This has nothing to do with private or independent schools. It has to do with programs in our schools where a child's ability to progress, to learn, to grow, to feel part of the school curriculum is being impeded by a government that actually is in court to prevent their participation.

When I look at these figures that my colleague from Sudbury tabled in the House just an hour ago, the fact is



that this Liberal government budgeted, in 2003-04, \$80 million for autistic services and only spent \$44 million. They clawed back \$36 million; almost half of the program was clawed back so they could put that money in other programs. They put it into the consolidated revenue fund. If you think about it, it's the same year that they announced some of the expansion for the casinos in this province. What are we to think of a government that stood in this very chamber and took credit that they were going to do more for families with autism, and that money has gone into the consolidated revenue fund and could have ended up in the expansion at the Windsor casino? And this tragedy repeated itself in 2004-05, where they got accolades. People applauded. They said they were going to spend \$89 million in 2004-05, but they clawed back another \$21 million.

You're asking us to pass this budget where \$82 million is being cut from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services—\$82 million. First of all, you've never, as a government, spent \$82 million on autism services, but now you're going to claw that back from the very minister who's responsible for delivering it. What does that bode for the coming year, where we've got not hundreds now, but thousands of young people on waiting lists for autistic services, thousands of young people who are not able to progress through our education system?

I understand that the Liberals are starting to flirt with this forward progress concept, this continuous progress concept: We want children in a system where they never experience failure. These kids experience failure every day. They're struggling to have someone give them the skills to unlock their own key inside them in order that they can learn and be better prepared to learn. I just think it's tragic, and we're being asked to approve a budget. You know what? This year they are out there saying that they will spend \$99 million on autism. Nobody believes it. What does that mean? That means that the new minister has now got a slush fund of an additional \$50 million to take away from autism. The whole thing is quite disheartening for families.

You know what the tragedy is? There are rich families and families who can sell off their RSPs and get their child through this period in their life, but increased numbers—I know of one family in Burlington who are moving to Alberta. They've done the math. It's cheaper for them to sell, to pull up stakes and go to Alberta because their child will get these services.

I want to briefly comment on the issues around health care. I know the minister, in his own mind, has got a plan, and he is making changes to our health care system. There's no question about that. But I want to address this issue of the growth hospitals in the GTA-905. In my opinion, this is becoming an increasingly critical issue. The only two hospitals in the GTA whose expansion plans have remained unaddressed by this government at this budget are the hospitals in Georgetown and in Burlington.

Our hospital, under your Bill 8, Minister, has had to ratchet down their service delivery because of the in-

credibly modest increase that you provided them this year. But under Bill 8, the only way that they can move even close to a balanced budget, even though they won't, is to slash 48 beds. One quarter of all the acute care beds in our hospital have been cut. They're closed. So your waiting-time strategy, in your mind, may be working in parts of Ontario, but it is not working in Burlington. Even though you've increased dollars for additional surgical time, the fact of the matter is we have 10 operating rooms at Joseph Brant hospital, of which only six are in use because you failed to fund them adequately. We've got empty beds. So cataract surgery in my hospital has gone from a two-year wait to 20 months. This is a huge victory for the current government: 20 months for cataract surgery. Hips and knees were 18 months, and they're now down to 16 months.

The truth of the matter is that Joseph Brant hospital requires this expansion. Both the district health council and the restructuring commission have approved them. We are waiting for your government. That's what we would like to see in this budget.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Ramsay has moved government notice of motion number 125. Shall the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2119 to 2129.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Duguid, Brad  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoy, Pat  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff

Levac, Dave  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Mossop, Jennifer F.  
Oraziotti, David  
Parsons, Ernie  
Peters, Steve  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil

Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed.

#### Nays

Dunlop, Garfield  
Jackson, Cameron  
MacLeod, Lisa

Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Miller, Norm

Murdoch, Bill  
Sterling, Norman W.

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 34; the nays are 8.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It now being after 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2132.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Flamborough-Aldershot		Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General / procureur général
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)		Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thornhill	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council. Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming-Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)		
Ottawa-Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)		Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity-Spadina	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)		<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Sarnia-Lambton	<b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)</b> Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	Willowdale	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Orazietti, David (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)		<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	Windsor-St. Clair	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough-Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux	York Centre / York-Centre	
Scarborough-Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	York North / York-Nord	
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	York West / York-Ouest	

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne  
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## CONTENTS

Monday 1 May 2006

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

<b>Time allocation, government notice</b>	
of motion number 125, <i>Mr. Bradley</i>	
Mr. Ramsay .....	3437
Mr. Miller.....	3438
Ms. Martel .....	3440
Mr. Arthurs.....	3444
Mr. Dunlop.....	3445
Mr. Marchese .....	3447
Mr. Orazietti .....	3449
Ms. MacLeod .....	3451
Mr. Lalonde.....	3452
Mr. Murdoch .....	3454
Mr. Milloy .....	3455
Mr. Jackson .....	3456
Agreed to .....	3458





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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 2 May 2006

Mardi 2 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### WEARING OF PINS

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** The Daisy of Hope campaign was initiated by Nova Vita domestic violence program services in Brantford in 1999. The campaign slogan states, "Buy a daisy and help us help abused women and their children. Because a life without violence is the only life to live."

Speaker, I seek unanimous consent in this province-wide campaign to wear the Daisy of Hope for the month of May.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Levac has asked for unanimous consent to wear the Daisy of Hope for the month of May. Agreed? Agreed.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** As my esteemed colleague from Simcoe-Grey pointed out on March 28, 2006, Markdale is still underserved when it comes to the number of doctors in the area. They are also waiting to hear from the Minister of Health, who in a meeting on November 16, 2005, promised to make a decision on whether the new hospital will get a planning and design grant.

Centre Grey hospital in Markdale has been described as aging and functionally obsolete. Without major repairs, it may only last two or three more years. Four—count them: four—accreditation surveys have recommended its replacement.

In 2002, Grey county approved the use of five acres of land on the site of the existing Grey Gables seniors' centre. The proposed new hospital will be connected to Grey Gables and will also include a medical centre. Not only have four of the lower-tier municipalities united to commit \$2 million to the building campaign, but Grey county has pledged \$1 million to the project, subject to provincial government approval. The Centre Grey General Hospital Foundation has succeeded in raising over its targeted \$12 million.

What this community would like as a first step is approval to proceed with functional planning for Centre Grey hospital services and work toward integrating with the long-term-care services at Grey Gables.

While I appreciate that Ministers Caplan and Smitherman met with me and Jim Wilson and several hospital officials, this hospital was not mentioned in the budget, and the community would like to move ahead. Over 20,000 residents are served by Centre Grey, the only hospital between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor.

I urge the minister: Revisit this important issue now.

#### DALTON FAMILY

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I rise in the House today to welcome Mr. William Peat, accompanying Mr. Brett Dalton's grade 9 class, who are visiting us today from Hillfield Strathallan College in Hamilton. Hillfield Strathallan College has a history that dates back four schools and five proud generations, commencing in 1901.

Brett Dalton, the teacher, is the grandson of Colonel Charles Osborne Dalton. On April 22, 2006, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada officially opened the Dalton Armoury in Scarborough in memory of his grandfather and his uncle, Colonel Elliot Dalton.

The Dalton brothers, known as Mark I and Mark II, stormed Juno Beach in Normandy on D-Day in 1944. Colonel Charles Dalton led "B" company on D-Day, landing on the beaches under heavy gunfire. Colonel Elliot Dalton led the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada's "A" company on a successful attack. He advanced his unit through the town of Bernières-sur-Mer, driving the enemy away. The Dalton brothers were leaders, and their fighting took them through Normandy into northern France.

I would like to offer my congratulations on the regiment's expansion and the establishment of the Dalton Armoury, and applaud the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada on their 146th birthday. Please join me in celebrating the Dalton family for their courage, leadership and dedication to Ontario and Canada.

The Dalton family tradition continues as Brett teaches leadership to these fine high school students from Hillfield Strathallan College. This wonderful school strives to develop a well-balanced student. Hillfield Strathallan College celebrates academic excellence, promotes community responsibility and encourages athletic prowess as well as maintaining a respect for history, thus leading us all to a successful world future. Welcome to all of you; I'm very proud of you.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could ask the members for

unanimous consent to defer for just five minutes my statement recognizing some folks gathering in the gallery, who are not quite here yet.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

#### RenewABILITY ENERGY INC.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** Last week, Waterloo region was once again the site of a major announcement concerning renewable energy. I had the pleasure of attending an event with Ontario's Minister of Energy, the Honourable Donna Cansfield, and noted environmentalist David Suzuki, where it was announced that an energy-saving technology called the Power-Pipe had been recommended by EnerQuality's technical committee.

The Power-Pipe, developed by RenewABILITY Energy Inc., has received approval for inclusion in the Energy Star technical specifications for new homes. The Power-Pipe is a drain-water heat-recovery system that recycles waste heat from warm drain water before it leaves the home.

Approximately 90% of the energy used to heat water goes down the sewer. The Power-Pipe recycles this energy, saving up to 40% on hot-water heating bills, the second-largest energy demand in the average house.

The technology is very affordable, having a payback period of only two to six years. The Power-Pipe will also reduce peak load electricity demand in homes with electric water heating and allow off-peak water heating only, which fits very well with time-of-use electricity metering. It's easy to install, requires no maintenance, will last more than 50 years and increases water-heating capacity.

I want to congratulate CEO Gerald Van Decker and the entire team at RenewABILITY Energy Inc., as well as Corey McBurney, director of operations at EnerQuality Corp., and Hans Schreff of London Hydro, who announced the Power-Pipe retrofit initiative that will take place in the city of London. Their ingenuity, creativity and vision are helping to secure Ontario's energy and environmental future.

As David Suzuki said of the announcement, "This announcement highlights the advances that can be made when Canadians are focused on efficiency. The Power-Pipe will help reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions and the need for producing more electricity."

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I rise in the House yet again to talk about more job losses in northern Ontario. As everybody knows, early last week Tembec announced an indefinite shutdown of the mill in Smooth Rock Falls. This equates to the sole employer in a community possibly shutting its doors and the entire community being without an employer. But it doesn't end there. The repercussions of this will affect jobs in Timmins and in places like Hearst; as we know, the

forestry industry is an integrated industry. Shutting down a kraft mill means that a sawmill somewhere is not going to have a market to sell wood chips. People like Lecours Lumber in Hearst are faced with the possibility of losing 250 jobs in that community if they're not able to secure a place to sell their wood chips, or the Tembec mill in Timmins, with over 150 employees, plus the staff.

1340

I say to this government, you guys have been sitting back, talking a good line about what you want to do for the north. All I can tell you is, it ain't working. We're losing jobs by the thousands, and if this government doesn't wake up soon, there ain't gonna be nobody left in northern Ontario to shut off the lights. We need you guys to wake up, to work with us in northern Ontario to resolve this issue.

Last point: If you think the deal on the softwood lumber industry has done anything to help us, you should be talking to sawmill operators today. They are livid. They feel that the Stephen Harper government has sold them down the road in accepting a deal that at the end of the day is nothing more than saying that the NAFTA ruling and our position on it were wrong.

#### GREATER TORONTO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It appears from just a cursory review of the media recently on the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority that it's certainly not up to the job. In fact, there's been a lot of fanfare, but the Toronto Star, one of the sources of information for the Liberal Party, is saying very clearly, in my view, "In the 2003 election, Premier Dalton promised to deliver such an agency, one with 'the clout and resources to tackle gridlock' across greater Toronto...."

"Sadly, this new authority has no clout and few resources."

So there you have it from their own briefing notes, the Toronto Star. Again today the Toronto Star is up to the task. They know that this particular authority is a shell. It has nothing but the outcome of delay added when you look at the governance model.

Even Mayor Dave Ryan from Pickering, the former seat of Wayne Arthurs, is quick to respond to this. He says that the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority has no power, no authority and no resources. So there you are, Minister. There's a big job ahead of you. But he does make a very thoughtful suggestion, and I want comment on what he is saying. He is saying, "Don't forget, as you've done in the recent budget, that Durham region has over 500,000 people, and much of the planning that needs to be done seems to ignore that." I think all of the regions are in for a great shock, when you look beyond the announcement of the bill that there's some authority. There's anything but authority in this bill.

I contest the minister to step up to the plate and do the right thing.



## GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** Last month's provincial budget provided \$5 million in support to the Ontario grape and wine industry, beneficial to my riding of Niagara Falls. In two of the last three years, the grape industry was ruined by extremely cold temperatures, resulting in hardship for the industry. Our government recognized the problem and moved to provide support for grape growers, the wine council and small and medium VQA wineries in Ontario.

I have received many letters, two of which I would like to read extracts from.

Jeff Aubry of Coyote's Run Estates winery wrote to me: "I wanted to convey my thanks for supporting the small and medium VQA wineries in Ontario. I can assure you the recent government grants, though unexpected, were warmly received. I have used the funds granted to Coyote's Run to purchase a rotary drum filter, an expensive high-tech piece of equipment that will boost the productivity of my operation and help protect my business in the event of another short crop."

Also, Linda Franklin, president of the Wine Council of Ontario, and Norm Beal, chair, wrote to me: "We are writing to thank you on behalf of the entire wine industry for your support and advocacy over the past few months. That advocacy has had a clear and important effect ... on the issues facing the wine industry. That support ... will provide critical help to the many wineries that were in real need after four difficult years." They conclude by saying, "Thank you again for all your efforts on our behalf, and for the important signal to our industry that your efforts produced in the 2006 budget."

The 2006 budget was a win for the grape growers, a win for the vintners and a win for the consumers of 100% Ontario-grown VQA wines.

## FORT ERIE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I thank my colleagues for their indulgence, because I wanted to welcome the Fort Erie Progressive Conservative Association of Women, their guests and particularly their president, Alma Sullivan, to the Legislature here today.

This is the longest-running PC women's association in Ontario, founded in 1939. Its members are hard-working, community-minded women who are dedicated to electing Conservative parliamentarians both to the provincial and the federal government, and like members benefit from all three parties, are dedicated and very active in their community to service groups, church groups and groups like the hospital auxiliary, the public library, literacy programs etc. They have successfully elected numerous Conservative members of Parliament over the course of their history, including the Honourable Rob Nicholson, the federal member for Niagara Falls, former Erie MP Girve Fretz and former Niagara Falls MP Joe Hueglin. Heck, if they can get me elected, they can get anybody in the Fort Erie area elected.

Very importantly, too, they provide a John Diefenbaker Scholarship for graduating high school students from the town of Fort Erie. It rewards students who have an average of over 80% in history and who volunteer on a campaign or are involved in student government or other acts of civic activity.

I want to thank the members of the Fort Erie Progressive Conservative Association of Women for their hard work and their dedication to a civic community, and I hope they have a wonderful day here at Queen's Park.

## NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** It was much appreciated last week that Premier McGuinty made a trip to northwestern Ontario, his second stop in our area in less than two months. At a time when our economy continues to struggle, particularly with the challenges in the forestry sector, the good news the Premier brought regarding funding for the cardiac and cancer research centre was, as you can imagine, very well received.

We are also grateful that the Premier, as Minister of Research and Innovation, is taking a personal interest in the molecular DNA research lab, which will need substantial provincial and federal support to be successful. Those of us who support this venture believe that this will be the basis for the new economy in northwestern Ontario. We are determined to see it move forward.

It was also encouraging to have the Premier confirm his interest in exploring the possibility of regionally-based energy pricing in northwestern Ontario. This is a concept that no other government has remotely broached, and it is reassuring to know that it remains an area of great interest to the Premier.

I was particularly pleased to learn that consultation on this subject will be held in the northwest later this summer. Frankly, the people who understand best how this could work are not at Queen's Park; indeed they are residents and business people from the northwest. The fact that they will have a chance to make a strong case for regional pricing is good news for those of us who support this concept.

All in all, it was a great trip by the Premier, where the people in northwestern Ontario got to see up close the commitment he and our government have to working with, and improving the lives of, all the residents in our part of the province.

## CITY OF NORTH BAY

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** North Bay taxpayers woke up to good news this morning. At last night's council meeting, it was announced that the city would be cutting its tax hike in half. This announcement is in good part a result of the McGuinty government's most recent budget and all the investments the provincial government is making in North Bay.

As North Bay taxpayers know, the federal and provincial governments are providing North Bay with



\$30 million through phase one of COMRIF for our water treatment plant. That was the single largest COMRIF grant in phase one in the province. The city of North Bay is also receiving an extra \$4 million from the northern Ontario heritage fund towards the city's one-third share of the plant, for a total of \$19 million invested in the plant, and we should see shovels in the ground shortly.

The city has also received \$3.4 million in this year's provincial budget for roads and bridges, money that the city wasn't expecting. In addition, the city has received an extra \$1 million towards this year's operating or capital budget.

The city is receiving \$900,000 this year in gas tax money to pay for the construction of our transit terminal on Oak Street and for the operation of our transit system. And the city received approximately \$160,000 in surplus funding from our local DSSAB because of the recent provincial uploading of land ambulance service costs.

This is just a short list of some of the investments the provincial government is making in North Bay that have led to the good news for city taxpayers. I am proud of the McGuinty government's investments that we've made in the city of North Bay directly, in our waterfront, in Canadore College, Nipissing University, the North Bay Regional Health Centre, the children's treatment centre and the continued four-laning of Highway 11. The taxpayers of North Bay are benefiting directly from our McGuinty government investments.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding any standing order, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the House shall meet on Wednesday, May 10, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the purpose of considering the following private members' public bills:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** You need to ask for unanimous consent to move this motion. Does Mr. Bradley have unanimous consent to make a motion without notice? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Thank you. I will move that motion, now that I have permission of the House.

I move that notwithstanding any standing order, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the House shall meet on Wednesday, May 10, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the purpose of considering the following private members' public bills:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement activity hours and board support, standing in the name of Mr. Klees;

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act

with respect to providing information to student employees about employment rights, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath;

Bill 96, An Act to amend the Education Act, standing in the name of Ms. Wynne; and

That these private members' public bills shall be considered pursuant to standing order 96 where applicable, with the time divided equally between the three; and

That the order for consideration of the bills shall be determined by a ballot conducted by the Clerk of the House; and

That Ms. Horwath shall retain her place in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved that notwithstanding any standing any order, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the House shall meet on Wednesday, May 10, from 9 a.m.—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Dispense?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Speaker:** —to 12 p.m. for the purpose of considering the following private members' public bills:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement activity hours and board support, standing in the name of Mr. Klees;

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to providing information to student employees about employment rights, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath;

Bill 96, An Act to amend the Education Act, standing in the name of Ms. Wynne; and

That these private members' public bills shall be considered pursuant to standing order 96 where applicable, with the time divided equally between the three; and

That the order for consideration of the bills shall be determined by a ballot conducted by the Clerk of the House; and

That Ms. Horwath shall retain her place in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motions?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** A very important motion. I know that the member for Niagara Centre didn't want me to miss this motion, so here it is. At the request—no, I won't say "At the request of the member for Niagara Centre."

I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 122. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.



*The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Jeffrey, Linda	Peterson, Tim
Arthurs, Wayne	Klees, Frank	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldip	Pupatello, Sandra
Barrett, Toby	Kwinter, Monte	Racco, Mario G.
Bartolucci, Rick	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Levac, Dave	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	MacLeod, Lisa	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Marsales, Judy	Runciman, Robert W.
Broten, Laurel C.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Matthews, Deborah	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Scott, Laurie
Cansfield, Donna H.	McGuinty, Dalton	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Chudleigh, Ted	McNeely, Phil	Smitherman, George
Craiton, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Fonseca, Peter	O'Toole, John	Wong, Tony C.
Gerretsen, John	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 74; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### EDUCATION WEEK

#### SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** As this is Education Week in Ontario, it gives me great pleasure to update this House on our goal of building opportunity by making public education the very best education. I know that the Minister of Education will be participating in a host of events celebrating public education this week in Ontario, and that she too will be making an important statement in this House tomorrow, so I wanted to make the following clear in my capacity as Premier in a government which is passionate about pursuing opportunities for our children through public education.

Every Ontarian needs and deserves the opportunity to succeed, and in today's world, the ladder of opportunity

starts with a great elementary and secondary education. Making publicly funded education the best education is essential to building a bright and promising future for all Ontarians. For one thing, the best education will give us the best workforce. In a world where up to 70% of new jobs demand some form of post-secondary education, giving our children the best education possible through our publicly funded system should be seen for what it is: Ontario's new economic advantage.

But learning, of course, is about more than just jobs, important as they are. It's also about the transmission of values and civility from one generation to the next. It's how we build a well-rounded society, form the best citizens and nurture our democracy. That great Irish poet William Butler Yeats once said, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." For too many students in Ontario recently, that fire had gone out.

When we took office two and half years ago, our once-proud public education system was caught in a slide.

Il n'y a pas si longtemps, un trop grand nombre d'élèves en Ontario avaient perdu cette flamme. Quand nous sommes arrivés au pouvoir il y a deux ans et demi, notre système d'éducation avait cessé de faire notre fierté et il traversait une sombre période.

Many families with the means were choosing private schools over public education, a stunning number of our young people were not finishing school and even the most remarkable of success stories were overshadowed by news of sliding morale, crumbling schools, lost programs and deep division.

In the last 30 months, working with our education partners—the families, students, parents and educators with a direct stake in the system—we have not only stopped the slide; we have turned the corner. That's good news, because in the end this isn't really about us in this place. It's about Ontario families out there who want the best education for their children, and we are firmly on their side.

After two and a half years, there is peace and stability in our schools. There are thousands of new teachers and up to a million new textbooks. Student achievement is up. Test scores in reading, writing and math are up. Our dropout rate is coming down. Older schools are being repaired; new ones are being built. Our most successful schools are sharing their best practices. Our struggling schools and our struggling students are getting the support they need to succeed. Schools are safer and students, all in all, have a better shot at success.

We have, of course, much more work to do together towards our goal of excellence for all, but after two and a half years, let's pause this week to celebrate the tremendous progress that we have made and thank those who are truly responsible.

Je disais que nous avons encore beaucoup de travail à accomplir ensemble pour atteindre notre objectif d'excellence pour tous et toutes. Mais après deux ans et demi, prenons un moment cette semaine pour célébrer l'immense progrès que nous avons accompli et remercier ceux et celles qui en sont les maîtres d'oeuvre.

So let's thank all those hard-working, dedicated principals, teachers and education assistants who never gave up hope even when reasons for hope were in short supply. Let's thank the students who are making the most of this opportunity to realize their potential. Let's thank their parents, families and mentors for all their help and their praise, and all their late nights at the homework table. Let's thank as well 12.5 million Ontarians whose continued abundant goodwill and support is essential to allowing our young people to succeed.

Let's use this week to focus on the work ahead, to maintain the momentum we will need to reach our goals in reading, writing and math; the momentum we will need to build a truly great economy that boasts the best-educated, most highly skilled workforce in the world; and the momentum to build a truly civil society that respects our diversity and honours shared values.

Great education can do all of that. Public education, at its very best, is worthy of our noblest aspirations when it comes to building a strong economy and a strong and caring society. Public education, at its very best, is worthy of the dreams that we dream for our children and our grandchildren.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED SERVICES AUX PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I rise today to tell this House about some important commitments our government is making to build a better future for Ontarians with a developmental disability.

Je suis fier de vous parler aujourd'hui d'un investissement historique dans les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle.

In September 2004, our government announced a major investment in Ontario's developmental services sector: a \$110-million investment to strengthen community-based services and greatly increase the number of residential spaces in our communities as we closed remaining institutions for people with developmental disabilities.

1410

Since that time, our commitment to this sector has grown significantly. We invested in the province's first community network of specialized care for individuals who have very high care needs. We announced the Home of Your Own initiative, which is creating hundreds more residential spaces across Ontario for adults with a developmental disability. We created our passport program, giving young adults with a developmental disability critical supports as they make the transition from school to adulthood.

Today I am proud to announce that the Ontario budget for 2006-07 includes the largest single-year increase in

funding for Ontario's developmental services sector, an increase of nearly \$84 million that brings our government's four-year commitment to a record \$276 million.

Lors de ma visite ce matin au centre CORE, j'ai annoncé la plus importante augmentation annuelle de financement pour le secteur des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle : une augmentation de près de 84 \$ millions qui porte l'engagement de notre gouvernement au montant record de 276 \$ millions.

But what's more important than the funding is what it will do to strengthen services for people with developmental disabilities.

This year's funding increase alone will support approximately 900 more young adults in our passport program, help approximately 3,150 more families care for their family members at home through our special services at home program, create more than 200 new residential spaces in communities across Ontario, provide permanent funding to help agencies provide long-term residential care for approximately 250 people and, finally, help more than 370 community agencies address salary and other operating costs. These are investments not just in services and supports but in the people and families who use these supports and in the people who provide them.

Ces investissements ne représentent qu'une partie de notre plan, qui consiste à mettre sur pied des mécanismes de soutien plus forts pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle. Nous travaillons ardemment à la transformation du secteur avec le réseau communautaire et associatif.

These investments are part of a plan to transform the developmental services sector. The members of this House may remember that in September 2004 our government also launched a major policy review of Ontario's developmental services sector. We did this because we knew that our developmental services system was at a turning point.

À mesure que notre société évolue et favorise l'intégration, les attentes des personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle évoluent également pour ce qui concerne les types de soins et de soutiens qu'elles veulent et dont elles ont besoin.

Aujourd'hui, elles veulent un système dans lequel les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle sont intégrées à tous les aspects de la société : établissements scolaires, programmes communautaires et population active. Leurs familles veulent davantage de choix et de souplesse pour se procurer les soutiens et les services dont elles ont besoin pour s'occuper de leurs membres chez elles.

We knew that we needed to step up and create a new plan for our developmental services sector that would make it easier for families to find services and supports, bring increased fairness and consistency to the way supports are delivered and give individuals and families the choice and flexibility they want to better meet their needs—a plan for a fair, accessible and sustainable



developmental services system and a plan that will help us achieve the vision of a more inclusive Ontario.

Today I was proud to release *Opportunities and Action: Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability*. This document outlines the plan that our government believes will help us achieve our vision. Our plan is based on six important principles:

- citizenship for people with a developmental disability;
- fairness and equity in the support they receive;
- accessibility and portability, so that funding and supports are flexible and can move with the individual;
- safety and security, so that people have the appropriate supervision, balanced by privacy and self-determination;
- accountability for the service that people receive; and
- sustainability, because we must use our resources wisely so that they are available for future generations.

And to deliver on our vision, our plan proposes some key directions for our developmental services system.

We encourage the members of this House to share *Opportunities and Action* with everyone in their community who has an interest in supports for people who have a developmental disability. Ask them to read it and give us their input and advice so that together we can create long-term solutions that will make it easier for families to get services, increase fairness and consistency in the delivery of supports, and give individuals greater choice and flexibility.

Ensemble, nous avons une possibilité de renforcer les mécanismes de soutien communautaire afin qu'ils soient durables pour les générations à venir, et afin qu'ils aident les milliers de personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle à s'épanouir et à participer pleinement à la vie de leurs collectivités.

I will be awaiting your comments and suggestions.

In closing, I wanted to pay tribute to the former Minister of Community and Social Services for all the good work she did.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to inform members of a significant anniversary that we are commemorating in the colourful history of mining in Ontario. It will be my honour on Thursday this week to help officially launch Sudbury Mining Week and a publication commemorating the 150th anniversary of the discovery of minerals in that geological marvel of the world known as the Sudbury Basin. Sudbury Mining Week is part of a province-wide celebration of the mining industry.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Albert Salter, a provincial land surveyor, observed significant compass deflections while laying out a line near present-day Sudbury. Analysis of rock samples revealed nickel, copper

and iron. This was the first indication of the Sudbury region's mineral wealth. Years later, the deposit was rediscovered and it became the Creighton mine, one of the world's leading nickel producers. Today, we know the basin to be one of the greatest repositories of nickel, copper and platinum group ores.

The discovery of minerals set off a chain reaction of engineering, logistical and metallurgical challenges. Finding, extracting, smelting and refining the complex mineral ores was not easy then, and it isn't easy now. Meeting those challenges calls upon courage. It calls upon perseverance. It calls upon ingenuity. For over a century, courage, perseverance and ingenuity have led to the development of new mining methods, pioneering technologies and innovative processes.

What is now abundantly clear is that while minerals may be the natural resource, our real endowment lies in the imagination and the will of people developing that resource. Built to address local circumstances, newly developed high-tech solutions are finding applications in mining operations and other industries around the world, and the world is beating a path to Ontario's door. We have a critical mass of mining expertise that is expanding and building upon itself. That is why our government provided \$10 million to help Laurentian University establish a new Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation at its Sudbury campus. The centre will harness the skills of the best and the brightest in industry, universities, colleges and research centres across the country and around the world. It will keep us on the leading edge of mining innovation.

The McGuinty government believes in the potential of this sector, and we are acting to ensure that it thrives now and well into the future. For example, we recently launched Ontario's first minerals development strategy, which will enhance the mineral sector's global competitiveness while opening new opportunities for all Ontarians. We are investing \$15 million over three years for geological mapping in the far north, we are providing one-stop Internet access to potential mining-related services and we are maintaining a very favourable tax system and business climate.

1420

Ontario Mining Week celebrates an industry that saw the value of the total mineral production rise to more than \$7.2 billion. It celebrates an industry that is considered a global leader in all aspects of mineral development, including financing, much of which takes place right here in Toronto, the mining finance capital of the world. It celebrates an industry that continues reinvesting in the exploration and development of new mineral deposits, including Ontario's first diamond mine on the James Bay coast.

Moreover, we are advancing growth in our mineral sector in collaboration with our stakeholders in the mineral development sector. With that in mind, I'd like to inform the House that today is Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park. Senior mining industry representatives will meet with cabinet ministers, MPPs, political staff



and senior public servants to continue building our dialogue and to help politicians gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the vital role of mining.

The message I will be bringing is that as far as the McGuinty government is concerned, the mining industry is critical to building a strong and prosperous economy so that we can help ensure our people enjoy a quality of life that is second to none.

In the gallery today, we have representatives from the mining industry. I'd ask them to stand, and could we recognize them.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Mr. Bartolucci:** I look forward to everyone meeting the miners tonight.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I wish to bring to the attention of the House that we have a former member, the member for Victoria-Haliburton and, latterly, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, in the 35th, 36th and 37th Parliaments, the Honourable Chris Hodgson.

It's now time for responses.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to respond to the Premier's statement on Education Week. On behalf of the official opposition, we certainly want to acknowledge the contribution of the teaching profession to education in this province, and we want to acknowledge the work of everyone involved in the education system, those on administrative staff and support workers.

This week has been set aside to honour and recognize all those who work within Ontario's education system, and we join in acknowledging the dedication of all who contribute to the acquiring of knowledge, the building of character and the development of responsible citizens. This includes teachers, principals, administrative and support staff, and parents who must always be embraced as key partners in education.

In keeping with the theme of Education Week, we must also acknowledge the significant contribution to our province that is made through the province's independent and faith-based schools. Just as Ontario's Catholic schools celebrate the unique and distinct contribution that Catholic education makes to Ontario's education system, we cannot ignore the petitioning of those who are calling on this Legislature to treat all faith-based schools in Ontario fairly and equitably and without religious discrimination to ensure that indeed we make every student count.

The Premier stated in his remarks that every Ontarian needs and deserves the opportunity to succeed. I would hope the Premier includes, in his definition of every Ontarian, all Ontarians and every student in this province. I would hope that includes the thousands of students, their parents, the teachers and support staff who attend, support, teach and work in the independent and faith-based schools in our province.

I would also hope the Premier includes, in his definition of Ontarians who deserve the opportunity to succeed,

autistic children, who continue to be left behind by our education system that falls shamefully short of meeting their most basic needs.

It is our hope that this Education Week will serve to focus our attention on all Ontarians who have the right, as we all firmly believe, to the opportunity to succeed in this great province.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I'm here to reply to the statement of the minister. I had looked forward to this announcement. I was hoping that the needs of the developmentally handicapped community would finally be met. Instead of that, I was most disappointed when I heard government by announcement once again: more promises to be broken.

More than three quarters of the platitudes we heard dealt with the budget. It was a repeat of the budget speech. I sat here and listened to the budget speech, and it was here again. There is still no plan. There is still no action. There are still no standards or timelines available to this community in need.

Dalton McGuinty wrote to David Lepofsky, who was then chair of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. He asked that the new act should include timelines and standards for effective enforcement. Nowhere has the minister indicated a plan containing any timelines or any standards, two of the essential parts of any plan. This is just another broken promise.

What you should be addressing is the real need of this community. You should not be closing more facilities: the Huronia Regional Centre, the Southwestern Regional Centre or Rideau Regional Centre. Please, Madam Minister, come up with a plan to help these people.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I'd like to say that mining is the lifeblood of Ontario's north. It's great to see that the current government is continuing the practice of the previous government of geological mapping to help out the mining sector. I certainly hope that they continue on. On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, we all appreciate and recognize the miners coming forward and recognize their hard work and dedication.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** First of all, on behalf of New Democrats and our leader, Howard Hampton, I would like to welcome all those from the mining industry here.

I worked underground. I worked as an active participant in the mining industry. I've been underground at 8,100 of the McIntyre mine, the Timmins property, the Aunor, the Delnite, and I've got to tell you, you don't look like anybody I saw underground back then. You're looking a lot cleaner than I was, because I'll tell you, after a day's work I was pretty dirty.



People need to understand just how technical and advanced that industry is. When we talk about mining, we're talking about high-tech jobs, we're talking about high-paying jobs, and that money stays in our community. We say, on behalf of New Democrats, it's nice to see that base metal prices are up and it's nice to see that gold prices are up. I went to the PDAC meeting in Timmins a little while back, and everybody was in a good mood. What a nice change. Welcome.

1430

### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** On behalf of New Democrats, I say that teachers are responsible for the intellectual, and yes, emotional development of our young kids and young children. I want to say that as a result of this, they are important workers and deserve our respect and support. Is this peace and stability that the Liberal government is giving us giving what we want? I want to look at a long list of things the government is doing that I don't believe give us what we need.

On the capital expenditure side: Less than 20% of the capital needs identified in 2002-03 have been addressed. At this rate, it could take the government four to six years to actually reach the spending levels they have announced.

On deficit budgets: All boards have deficits, and all boards cut programs to create the illusion that the books are balanced. The funding model is inadequate, it's flawed, and it still needs to be repaired. And yes, the Liberals are still using the flawed Conservative funding formula.

On special education: All boards are taking money from other programs to pay for special education, according to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board investigators. That is the new normal in Ontario education.

On ESL: ESL programs have been all but eliminated due to the inadequate funding model. Students need English-as-a-second-language services. If students are not supported adequately, then classroom teachers have to spend a disproportionate amount of time assisting those students. It also increases the likelihood of students becoming disconnected from learning and from Canadian society as a whole.

On curriculum: Despite the fact that music, physical ed., and visual and dramatic arts are all mandatory subjects in the elementary curriculum, there is presently no funding specifically designated in the education funding formula for teachers in these subjects.

On class size: We're concerned that the government is talking about average class sizes instead of caps.

On test scores: The government results will continue to be manipulated to produce whatever results the government wants.

We thank educators and parents, and we affirm and confirm that teachers deserve more support than they are currently being given.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** In response to the Minister of Community and Social Services, for two years in this House we have listened as members of this House have stood with petitions. They have stood on all sides of the House with thousands of signatures, demanding to know what this government is doing. The families of the people in the regional centres have been forced into the courts. They have been forced to fight through the legal system in order to protect their loved ones. Today we have seen that there are no new plans for the regional centres. Today we have seen that there are no real plans for community services to take their place at the time those regional centres may be closed.

I can only quote from a document I got today from Dr. Lyz Sayer, who I think says it best:

"It is the most contrived propaganda I have seen. Read between the lines to see there is no legislation that says the government has to support the disabled." Read between the lines to see that "we're getting out of the business of housing the disabled." Read between the lines to see that "individualized funding is the best ... this will undermine the whole infrastructure of not only schedule 1 facilities but all the group homes and agencies. The latter don't have enough money now, and it looks like they'll get less in the future."

She goes on to say, "I went to one consultation and was appalled at how it was set up to only discuss and report on what they wanted...." It concludes, "and none of the discussion my group had about facilities was recorded."

That's the reality of what's happening here: People want to be heard; they have not been heard. The announcement today is more announcement upon re-announcement of a government that has no plan.

### VISITOR

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to call to your attention and the attention of members of the House the presence in the lower east gallery of Sarah Chown, who is a university student and the granddaughter of the former mayor of the city of St. Catharines, Mac Chown.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** And minister responsible for women's issues; thanks so much. I would



like to ask for unanimous consent today so that all parties may address Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

**The Speaker:** Ms. Pupatello has asked for unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize Sexual Assault Prevention Month. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. This is a time for all of us to renew our commitment to ending the sexual violence that devastates the lives of far too many women and girls in Ontario. It's a time for us to move from a focus on intervention after the violence has occurred to a focus on preventing violence from happening in the first place, changing the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate it. We hope that is a signal and a message we have repeated often in this House.

Our government is helping vulnerable women by improving supports for victims of sexual assault. Victims have the right to receive timely and effective treatment. Last year, we implemented the first funding increase to our sexual assault centres in 13 years. We're providing a total of \$12.5 million annually so that sexual assault victims get the community supports they need. I'm pleased to say that, in addition, we made a special one-time investment earlier this year of \$1.3 million for enhancements in sexual assault agencies across Ontario. And I always thank the Attorney General of Ontario for working in tandem with our offices to assist in this sector.

A real improvement depends on much more than funding. Solving the problem depends on not just supporting the victims but on preventing them from being victimized in the first place. We really do need to change attitudes and behaviours on individual and societal levels. We need to teach our children about the importance of healthy, equal relationships. If boys grow up knowing they need to respect women and girls, if girls grow up with the confidence that they can stand up for themselves and others, if all children grow up believing in and practising gender equality, we're going to make great progress in eradicating the power imbalance that's always at the root of sexual assault. Each of us has a role to play in this, from parents to teachers, neighbours and friends. We have a role to play in modelling respectful behaviour toward women and children.

I'd also like to mention the daisy campaign, which today we've already asked permission to wear in the House. I hope that all of us will take time to wear this daisy throughout this month. Nova Vita, the shelter in Brantford, of which our own member Dave Levac has been a long-time supporter, does some tremendous work. They actually began this daisy campaign to help promote the notion that all of us have to be a part of the solution. We congratulate volunteers like the board that leads Nova Vita, because there are so many organizations with an equal amount of passion in this area throughout Ontario. These pins help us recognize the incredible work of women's shelters across the province. Let's proudly wear the pin as a sign of all our resolve to keep working together to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Let's not rest until this task is done.

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** I'm pleased to be able to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus in recognizing Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. This month has been recognized in Ontario since 1988, and it's a way to create public awareness of sexual assault and to improve the prevention of violence against women and children.

All parties in this House are committed to ending violence of all kinds. We must provide strong leadership to ensure that women and children have the support they need and that the perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes. We must ensure that public education teaches the important lesson that violence must stop, that it has a devastating impact on women's lives and the lives of our children, our families, our communities and our country.

The cost in dollars and cents is minor compared to the incalculable costs of damage to human dignity and self-esteem. For women who have suffered the pain, whose potential has been destroyed, whose spirits have been crushed, we must commit ourselves to preventing the violence. Crisis intervention workers, front-line workers in shelters, police and health workers can all attest to the damaging effect this has on our neighbourhoods and our communities. The effects of this violence are both long-term and far-reaching.

Each one of us, individually and together, must take responsibility and must continue to work to build safe homes, safe communities and safe workplaces. Sexual assault can take place between intimates, dating partners, friends, acquaintances or strangers. Rapes committed by acquaintances of the victims are the most common form of sexual assault.

**1440**

Unfortunately, sexual assaults occur much more frequently than we know, because they are not always reported. More than one third of Canadian women report having had at least one experience of sexual assault since the age of 16. Victimization surveys suggest that only 10% of women—or fewer—who are sexually assaulted report these assaults to the police. In cases reported to police, 80% of sexual assault victims knew the accused. They were friends, acquaintances or family members. Children and young people under the age of 17 account for 61% of sexual assault cases reported to police. About three quarters of these victims were girls, and more than two thirds of these girls were between 11 and 17 years of age.

These statistics are indeed chilling. They must spur us to continue to take action to fight the crime of sexual assault. As legislators, we must do our part, along with the courts, law enforcement, social agencies and individual citizens. In my own riding of York North, I would like to acknowledge the work of the York region abuse program in Newmarket, which offers hope and healing to people of all ages affected by childhood sexual abuse.

Sexual assault is a crime. It is not simply something undesirable or unfortunate; it is a violation of the rights of women and girls, as citizens, to feel secure in their



homes, workplaces, in public, at school. It must be stopped.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I'm pleased to rise to take note of Sexual Assault Prevention Month on behalf of New Democrats here in the Legislature today.

The statistics on sexual assault are stark: Two out of three women have experienced sexual assault; 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends; four out of five female undergraduates surveyed at Canadian universities said they had been victims of violence in a dating relationship; 29% reported incidents of sexual assault; 22% of women who have been victims never tell anyone.

Ontario sexual assault centres are still recovering from the 5% cut to their operating budgets a few years ago.

We need to see real action on changing laws to better protect women and avert potential tragedies. We'd like to see more done in the schools to combat sexual assault and date rape. That problem is largely hidden, as few of these crimes are actually reported. According to Statistics Canada, only 6% of all sexual assaults are reported to police. Only 1% of women who have been sexually assaulted by an acquaintance report the incident to police. In Canada in 1998, 82.6% of victims in reported cases of sexual assault were women; 98% of the accused were men.

Men who commit sexual assault come from every economic, ethnic, racial, age and social group. Men who commit sexual assault can be doctors, teachers, employers, co-workers, lawyers, husbands, student colleagues or relatives of the women they assault. Here's another troubling statistic: In a recent survey on date rape, 60% of Canadian college-age males indicated that they would commit sexual assault if they were certain they would not get caught.

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 21 are at the highest risk of being sexually assaulted. In 70% of the reported cases of sexual assault, the victim knew the accused, and 62% of the victims were under the age of 18. If they are sexually assaulted, it will most likely be by a boy or a man who is a friend, a family member or someone else they know—probably not by a stranger.

Part of this month is about communicating the risks and repercussions of sexual assault. It's also about making sure that girls and women know unconditionally that as a society, as women and as men, we will not, do not and can never condone this behaviour, and we will stand by them. They must report, but we must be there to support them throughout their experience with the justice system and throughout their ongoing time of healing after that, through supporting the women's centres and the sexual assault centres across the province that they will turn to for help.

I believe all of this should be happening throughout the year. Unfortunately, school is not the happy, safe place for many students that people might like to think it is. For some, school are the place where bullying, racism and sexist violence is taking place. That's why all of us

supported the Miss G project when it came here not too long ago, having women's studies and women's issues built into the secondary school curriculum. Seeing that the Minister of Education is also the minister responsible for women's issues, I look forward to hearing her announce the mandated women's studies course in Ontario high schools at some point. That's one of the ways we can create a culture of respect for women, by taking their concerns and contributions seriously and giving them the permanent profile they deserve.

Sexual assault centres in Ontario, like the one in Hamilton and area, very much need additional funding to work with women from our diverse communities, reaching out in their own languages to help them deal with sexual abuse and assault. Hamilton is the third-largest immigrant-receiving community in Canada. We need to remove some of the financial barriers that prevent cities like mine from offering services to their diverse communities.

Governments can't do enough and aren't doing enough on this priority file, but I know that today we're all recommitting to making sure that we increase the interest and the attention we pay to this most serious issue. It's our children, it's our daughters, it's our nieces, and it's our nephews and our sons whom this issue deals with every single day, in our communities, in our schools, in our workplaces, in our dances and in places where young people gather. It's unacceptable.

We know that women's groups have long called for more action. We know that coroner's juries have long called for more action. I'm pleased to be here today, knowing that every one of the members sitting in this Legislature is committed to ending sexual violence in Ontario.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise to note that Grand Chief Stan Louttit of Mushkegowuk tribal council is here among us in the east gallery, and somewhere behind him is Chief Leo Friday from the community of Kashechewan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you and welcome.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### CLASS SIZE

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Premier. You've had a lot to say about the impact of large class sizes on the quality of education. We see evidence emerging now in many places suggesting that the result of your government's policies is much larger class sizes in grades 4 to 8, and things like the elimination of music rooms and people being put into



basement classrooms. What do you propose to do about these exploding class sizes in grades 4 to 8 that are happening on your watch? How does this qualify as turning the corner, to use the words you used in your statement today, for those kids and those families who are in these exploding classes in the upper grades?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I'm glad to receive the question. We are very much committed to our plan to get class sizes down in the early years, from JK through to grade 3. The reason we're doing that is because we think it's really important, particularly in those tender years, to ensure that children have more individual attention so that they can get the necessary support to develop better success, not only during those years but we have learned that if children can experience real success in those years, they are more likely to continue to experience that throughout their learning, through the rest of elementary school, secondary education, training, college and university. That's why we are so focused on that.

To respond directly to the leader of the official opposition, we are getting those class sizes down by providing new teachers in those particular years. This is not something that's coming at the expense of classes and class sizes in the rest of our elementary and secondary schools. We are very much devoted to doing this in a way that does not compromise the quality of education in the other years.

**Mr. Tory:** An article, for example, in the National Post this morning confirms what many people have been saying. I ran into it at the door with a teacher in the Danforth by-election, who said, "There's absolutely no question." She talked about her own experience, where the class sizes in the upper grades of her school are going up.

We have a letter from a Toronto father by the name of Steve—he didn't want his last name used in the House. He's written to us about his daughter going into grade 6 this year. He says there will be a combined grades 5 and 6 class with 36 kids per class, plus an additional three to four special-needs kids for half the day. As a result, his daughter will be sharing a class with 40 other students. So we've got this bulking up of the upper grades because of, or connected to, or unconnected to—but the bottom line is it's going on—your policies of your government.

Do you believe it is fair to have average smaller class sizes—and, of course, you always use that word "average"—in the lower grades and achieve that by punishing the students in the higher grades by having their class sizes going up and up and up? Do you think that's fair? Is that what you intended with this policy?

1450

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, we're not talking about averages in this government. That's something that was part of the lexicon under the previous government. We're talking about a cap of 20% on class sizes from JK to grade 3. Some 70% of our students are now in smaller classes. We have hired 2,400 new teachers so far to get the class sizes down. This is all about reducing class sizes

in a way that does not compromise class size or the quality of education we're delivering throughout the rest of publicly funded education.

This is an important initiative on our part. It has to do with ensuring that children in the early years—from the ages of four through to eight, I believe it is, in grade 3—have the opportunities they need to get individual attention so that they can succeed, especially when it comes to reading, writing and mathematics. This is not without its challenges, but we are determined to get the job done, and we're proud of the success we've made so far.

**Mr. Tory:** The question I asked, of course, was about the upper years and the fact that you are indeed robbing Peter to pay Paul here. You are achieving whatever you are achieving, average or otherwise, in terms of class sizes in the lower grades at the expense of those in the upper grades.

We see two things: One is the classes being cannibalized in the lower grades, where we have people now studying in basement classrooms where the teacher is barely able to stand up. We have music rooms being taken away so that those classes can be put there. Then we have the other question, which is what is the use of having a student in grade 3 at a low class size when what happens the next year is it's okay for them to go to a class of 40 students and that's suddenly all right for those kids in grade 4?

We asked your Minister of Education about this in estimates—what the facts are and what is going on in grades 4 through 8—and she refused to answer. I'm asking you, why are you insisting on massively forcing up the size of classes for grades 4 to 8? Why are you massively forcing up the class size in those upper grades?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think this is one of those opportunities where it is worthwhile for members of this House and Ontarians to compare and contrast. Under the previous administration, they closed 503 public schools while 266 private schools opened up. We lost 24 million learning days as a result of the bickering and fighting. Some 430,000 high school students were deprived of an entire year of extracurricular activities. Test scores were stagnant and special-education students were largely ignored.

Let's see what's happened on our watch. Test scores are up. There are more books in our school libraries. More special-ed kids are getting the help they need, and we've hired, in both the elementary and secondary panels, 4,300 more teachers. Class sizes are coming down in the early grades. Dropout rates are coming down. Peace and stability are back. Arts, music and phys. ed. classes are back in. Guidance counsellors are back in. Student success teachers are in. Lead teachers in literacy and numeracy in our elementary schools are there for the first time. I ask Ontarians—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

**Mr. Tory:** No answer on the question of exploding class sizes for grades 4 through 8, no answer whatsoever. Many other—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.



## TAXATION

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is again to the Premier. People who go to a bar to buy a drink presently pay the 7% GST, probably soon to be lowered, and a 10% provincial beverage tax. So the day after people sent you, with their income tax returns, hundreds of dollars in the McGuinty health tax that you said you would never bring in, if they wanted to go and have a drink to revive themselves from tax fatigue, you are now proposing in your legislation to add one more tax.

Can you confirm that the city of Toronto act enables the city to bring in yet another tax on drinks, that in addition to the GST, in addition to the 10% provincial beverage tax, you're going to allow another tax to be brought in by another level of government to tax a drink that a person might want to go and have?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Well, let me say that the Conservative Party and the government party have a different perspective on whether or not we can trust the people of Toronto to do what is right for the people of Toronto. The leader of the official opposition is saying that they are not to be trusted, that we have no idea what they're going to do, that they constitute a real risk to themselves.

We have brought forward legislation which recognizes that the people of Toronto, through their duly elected representatives, have certain rights that ought to be recognized and respected. This fundamentally, from my perspective, boils down to whether or not this government has confidence in the people of Toronto to do what is right for the city of Toronto. We on this side of the House have that confidence.

**Mr. Tory:** What the Leader of the Opposition is actually saying, I say to the Premier, is that people are paying enough tax, including on a drink. When they go to try and have a drink, or when tourists try to come and patronize our tourist and beverage establishments in Ontario, they are paying enough tax. That's what I'm saying.

I've heard from a great many people, as we have as members of the Legislature, people coming in here and giving us presentations on this bill that suggest that you should have addressed and should be addressing the provincial-municipal fiscal imbalance first; then, second, when it comes to the city of Toronto, asking if they might do a value-for-money audit of all the money they're presently taking in from taxpayers before you look at any new powers to tax drinks or anything else.

Would you consider putting aside these proposed powers to tax drinks and various other things until you have first addressed the provincial-municipal fiscal imbalance and until you've asked for a value-for-money audit of the city government, before you go having people raise taxes again? Will you do that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I am not prepared to do that, but I think there's another interesting opportunity today

to compare the financial position which the new Conservative federal government has inherited and the one that we inherited here at Queen's Park. Prime Minister Harper has been the beneficiary of good fiscal management, so he's swimming in cash. We were the beneficiaries of bad fiscal management, so we were drowning in deficit. If we had the opportunity to do so, we would proceed quickly to reverse the download that was imposed on Ontario municipalities by the previous government, but we're not in that position. We will continue to work with Ontario municipalities in a thoughtful and responsible way, working together so that we might overcome the challenges created by the previous Ontario Conservative government.

**Mr. Tory:** This, of course, coming from the man who has taken in \$6 billion in extra revenue from hard-working taxpayers and is still running a deficit of \$2.5 billion. There's good fiscal management for you.

This legislation, I say to the Premier, would allow the city to tax at will. They could tax anything from drinks to hotel rooms to theatre tickets. With struggling US tourism numbers and the dollar now at 90 cents, many people feel this will drown our hospitality industry and make it even tougher for them to keep the jobs that they have.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The Minister of Health needs to come to order.

The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** My question to the Premier is this: It's going to destroy and make even more difficult jobs in the hospitality industry, make it tougher for them to stay in business. Can you confirm that this power to tax drinks that's contained in the city of Toronto act will be a part of the new Municipal Act as well, so it will go province-wide and make life difficult not just for tourism operators, not just for taxpayers, not just for visitors to Toronto, but for visitors everywhere in the province, tourism operators and bar operators everywhere? Are you going to take it province-wide in the Municipal Act? Will you confirm that?

1500

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's pretty hard to figure out where my honourable colleague is coming from. First, he says that the people of Toronto cannot be trusted, and I'm trying to figure out whether he's running against me or Mayor Miller these days. He says the people of Toronto can't be trusted because they're going to make the wrong decision when it comes to accessing new taxation authority. Then he's asking me if I might ensure that all Ontarians have access to that same authority so that the ne'er-do-wells who apparently populate municipal councils throughout the province will also foist this upon their constituents.

Let me say that we start from a different premise on this side of the House. We think that the overwhelming majority of people in this province want their elected representatives to do, and that indeed those elected representatives want to do, the right thing for their people. I



have confidence that municipal councils, whether here in Toronto or elsewhere in Ontario, will carefully consider the issues before them and make the appropriate decisions that serve the best interests of the people they are privileged to represent. They see things differently. We're quite positive when it comes to these things.

### HOSPITAL SECURITY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Expectant moms and dads across Ontario are worried about a recent attempted baby abduction at a Toronto hospital. Two women posing as volunteers walked into the maternity ward of Humber River Regional Hospital, snatched a baby, left the hospital and got away. Police and security officials were later able to make an arrest. Premier, how could this have happened at an Ontario hospital and what is the McGuinty government prepared to do to make sure it doesn't happen again?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It is of course an important question to Ontarians, and I had the chance to speak with the media about it a day or two ago. Ontario's hospitals, 152 of them in more than 200 locations across Ontario, are quite unique. They have been built differently, they've emerged differently and each one of them has community-based governance, which includes the responsibilities associated with the operation and provision of security. Accordingly, the primary responsibility here rests with the local hospital.

Our responsibilities are to work with them, to support them, to be of assistance and guidance. Accordingly, we've been working through the Ontario Hospital Association to lend any assistance to any Ontario hospitals that may feel the need to have their programs reviewed. The primary responsibility lands in each local community, where professional hospital administrators and a board that reflects the local community take responsibility for these actions. At the ministry, we take responsibility for working in support of them. These are the steps we've taken, and we'll always be there at their side to lend assistance when required.

**Mr. Hampton:** After the attempted abduction, Global television sent three reporters to three different hospitals to investigate what was happening. In each case, the reporters got into wards and very close to recently born children. I suspect the parents of infants in this province want to know that something real and concrete is going to be done about this. Can you tell us what specific steps and additional resources the McGuinty government is prepared to make available to hospitals to ensure this doesn't happen again?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** On the issue of additional resources, the budget of the Minister of Finance has provided about 600 million additional dollars to Ontario's hospitals. This is to support the priorities that they deter-

mine. We're all concerned with the circumstances that arose, both the original circumstance at Humber River Regional and those other occurrences. Accordingly, hospitals across Ontario will be—must be—reviewing their procedures to ensure the safety of patients who are there. Different hospitals in Ontario have already implemented much more onerous, if you will, security provisions. We're looking to the Ontario Hospital Association to share best practices with any hospitals that may require assistance.

I accept the honourable member's point that it's appropriate that everybody who has the obligation, responsibility and privilege of running a hospital in Ontario do so in a fashion that affords the greatest degree of protection possible for our patients. Accordingly, it's appropriate to expect that across the health care system people are reviewing their procedures. As I said in my earlier answer, the ministry stands alongside them as a partner, willing to assist as required, and in our partnership with the OHA as well.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think that if you are parents of a newborn, the prospect of having your infant child abducted has to be just about the worst nightmare someone could have. There are a couple of things the McGuinty government could do. You promised 8,000 new, additional nurses. You're not there yet. In fact, you're not even close. That's one thing: Ensure there are more caregivers in our hospitals to look after patients, especially patients like these who can't look after themselves.

Some hospitals have been able to afford electronic warning systems, where if someone tries to snatch an infant child, an alarm goes off and the doors lock. Is the McGuinty government prepared to ensure that both of those things happen in our hospitals to ensure that no parents have to face this kind of terrible situation?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I would happily remind the honourable member that he perhaps should appropriately preface his questions about nurses by a candid acknowledgement that during the time he had the privilege of serving, 2,944 fewer nurses found employment in Ontario. And according to Doris Grinspun, the executive director of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, we've brought at least 4,500 nurses to the fore in practice in the province of Ontario. This is something that we should be proud of.

I do feel very much like it's appropriate to ask each and every hospital to take responsibility for appropriate security provisions in their hospital. They're very, very different across the province of Ontario. There is no one-size solution. As I've said twice now, it's our responsibility to work alongside our partner hospitals, to use the Ontario Hospital Association to assist in the dissemination of best practices, to lend any assistance that's required to any hospital that feels that its procedures might be inadequate. And of course, based on the circumstances, everybody would appropriately be reviewing those procedures to make sure those little itty-bitty babies entrusted to our care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.



## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Premier, Adeline Levine is a 91-year-old senior. She lives at Fairhaven long-term-care home in Peterborough. Yesterday, her meal plan at the home consisted of cereal in the morning, soup for lunch, and for dinner, a chicken leg with red cabbage. Our seniors deserve dignity, but under your government the daily food budget for seniors in long-term-care homes has been frozen at \$5.34 a day. That's less than the \$10 a day a prisoner incarcerated in an Ontario jail receives. Premier, when are you going to keep your promises so that seniors living in long-term-care homes can eat healthy food?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Of course we take very, very seriously the responsibilities of providing very good quality long-term care to our residents. There are 618 long-term-care homes in Ontario that are providing care to approximately 75,000 of our most vulnerable citizens. Accordingly, our government has invested an additional \$740 million in the operation of long-term care since our government has enjoyed the privilege of being government in Ontario.

Obviously, we make sure that professional services associated with long-term care, such as diet, are appropriate for patients. If there are concerns in an individual case with respect to the quality of service, we've worked very hard to create a 1-800 action line that is responded to immediately. I think that we have a lot of confidence in the people who are running long-term-care homes to provide appropriately, and look forward to offering more information in supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, Adeline Levine is the president of the Fairhaven resident and family advisory council. She's not alone in objecting to the food. She and 1,000 other seniors at Fairhaven signed a petition asking you for \$2 more per day for food. To quote her, "At least give us a fresh tomato. Celery. Anything." But your government responded by actually freezing the budget for seniors in long-term-care homes in Ontario. The budget is the same this year as it was last year.

Premier, seniors deserve dignity. When are you going to listen to seniors like Adeline Levine?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member's interest in the issue does not forgive the inaccuracies in his question. There has been an increase in the provision of support for long-term-care homes in each and every year that our government has had the privilege of being in government, and that pattern shall be expected to continue. The only thing that has been frozen for residents in the long-term-care sector has been increased copayments. I'm very proud that we've worked hard to fulfill the commitment that we made to residents in long-term care, not to mention the first increase in the comfort allowance in something like two decades.

1510

We are very pleased to acknowledge the necessity of providing a very high standard of care in our long-term-care homes. We believe that is the case across Ontario. In those circumstances where residents feel that the quality of care is inappropriate, we work very hard to make sure that, through our action line, any concerns are appropriately investigated and that that is done in a timely way.

I will look very hard for the opportunity to work with the people from Fairhaven and other long-term-care homes to see what we might be able to do to address the concerns that have been brought forward, because the only appropriate standard in long-term care is a very high standard.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want you to notice what the Minister of Health tried to pass off as an answer. He said, yes, there's been an increase in personal care and support of \$2.33 a day, and he tried to get people to believe that that was an increase in the food budget. In fact, it's not. The food budget has been flatlined at \$5.34 a day.

Sandra More has a family member in the special care unit at Fairhaven long-term-care home in Peterborough. She says the food situation at Fairhaven is desperate: "... residents sitting in soiled diapers, snacks consisting of sugary cookies and drinks made from artificial juice crystals. In three years, I have never seen a piece of fruit, a container of yogurt or any food being offered as a snack that had any nutritional value."

Seniors deserve dignity. In a year when the McGuinty government had \$3 billion of additional windfall revenue, why is the food budget for Ontario's seniors frozen at \$5.34—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** If the honourable member is interested at all in accuracy, he'll read back his second question and my answer, he'll see that it is me who is working on a consistent basis.

I want to say that it is in recognition—

**Mr. Hampton:** Try that outside, George.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Did you say, "Take it outside"?

It is interesting to note that the honourable member, who has associated with his reputation in government only cuts, can't even acknowledge that in a year we made a 5.8% investment in the area with respect to long-term care.

Of course, we're obviously very oriented in a fashion to address the concerns that come from family, resident councils and residents themselves. Accordingly, as I said in my earlier answer, I'll look to address the circumstances that have been brought forward at Fairhaven and encourage people who are experiencing circumstances that they don't find satisfactory in the long-term-care sector to take advantage of the 1-800 action line, which is responded to very promptly and where we seek to get to the bottom of issues that are brought forward.



## COMMITTEE WITNESSES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Minister of Education: During estimates committee on Tuesday, April 25, I requested that the chair and the executive director of the Ontario College of Teachers be requested to attend the committee and be available to respond to specific questions relating to the administration and operations of the college. Can you confirm for us today that these individuals have in fact been invited, that they will be attending and that they will be authorized by you to answer specific questions at the committee? Would you do that for us?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** As the member opposite knows, he made quite an extensive list of individuals he'd like to have appear before the estimates committee. We've certainly had this list, and we would have appreciated having it sooner—for example, when you knew you would call this ministry, a week could have been better used. There are individuals who are out of town, but we're endeavouring to put everyone you've asked for before estimates. We actually have so much good news that we would like you to extend the hours of estimates specifically for the Ministry of Education.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Klees:** It may be a joke to the minister that the estimates committee is a place for her to parade good-news stories. The purpose for estimates is for the official opposition and the third party to determine whether or not these agencies and commissions, and the government itself, are in fact accountable. It's for that reason that we've asked for these people to attend.

I want to ask the minister again: Will these people who have been requested to attend consider it the priority that they should, and will they be authorized by you, as minister, to specifically answer questions? That's my question to you.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I have to tell the member opposite this: We have endeavoured to put everyone that you've asked for before you at estimates committee. But you've made it very apparent, including the leader of your party, that while we are giving all of the answers as they're tabled in estimates—you can look at all of the budget numbers—you simply don't like the answers that you're hearing, because the contrast between our government in education and your government in education couldn't be more striking. We are investing \$2 billion in this education system since 2003. We have thousands more teachers there to support pupils in the classroom. We are helping build a system based on quality for the first time, receiving challenges because we dare the community to talk about quality in education. I'll see you at estimates this afternoon and continue to table more good news about this government on education.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** A question for the Premier: Since the early 1990s, it has been the policy of successive Ontario governments to use best efforts to ensure that rail transit cars for the operations of Ontario cities—urban transit systems in Ontario cities—would be built in Thunder Bay. The strategy has been to ensure that Ontario taxpayers' money is used to create jobs in Ontario, is used to create economic activity in Ontario and is used to create a sustainable industry in Ontario.

My question is, why has the McGuinty government abandoned that policy? Why are \$200 million of Ontario taxpayers' money for city of Ottawa rail transit vehicles being used to build those cars in California, rather than in Thunder Bay?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** Actually, we are very proud of our investment in public transit. We have made a record investment this year. We made a record investment last year. I'm very pleased to tell the honourable member that all the GO Transit contracts, in fact, went to Bombardier in Thunder Bay. The Ottawa situation—they went through a very fair and transparent process and, at the end of the day, they selected the trains that were most suitable to them in a very fair and transparent process. We have worked very closely with Bombardier over a period of time, and we have met them several times and, as I understand, the plant has been quite busy.

**Mr. Hampton:** The question was, why has the McGuinty government abandoned a good policy which ensured that rail transit vehicles for urban transit systems were built in Ontario by Ontario workers? Minister, you need to inform yourself. There are hundreds of workers laid off at that plant and hundreds more facing layoff. The strategy was to ensure that Ontario taxpayers' money would build a good industry in Ontario, and Ontario benefited because the workers and the company paid property taxes, sales tax, income tax, corporate taxes.

Can you tell the workers in Thunder Bay who are laid off, and the other workers who are facing layoff, why it's a good idea that \$200 million of Ontario taxpayers' money goes to California, while those Thunder Bay workers lose their jobs?

1520

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** The Minister of Public Infrastructure, please.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I'm delighted to take the question. It's somewhat ironic that this is a member of a party who, when they were in government, sold the rolling stock of GO to a consortium in the Caribbean. So please, sir, I think we need some facts in this matter.

There was, of course, an expired memorandum of understanding between the province of Ontario and



Bombardier located in Thunder Bay. The city of Ottawa, responsible for the O-Train project, of which we are a partner for funding purposes, is not bound by that agreement. They have gone through a fair, open and transparent tendering process and invited all parties to come and bid. That is precisely what happened. In fact, the province is very supportive of the city of Ottawa undertaking this action. We are a funder to the tune of some \$200 million to expand light rail in Ontario. This is part of ReNew Ontario and Move Ontario, the McGuinty government's unprecedented investments in transit in this province.

## EDUCATION

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I know from both my career in teaching and my role as a parent how important it is to engage parents in the education of their children. Studies have shown that increased parental involvement in education leads to improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, better behaviour and greater self-confidence for the students. In my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, parents of students in Cornwall and Long Sault attend Littératie familiale workshops, which focus on literacy development. These workshops show parents the kinds of books that will best help their children learn to love reading. Minister, what other opportunities are there for parents to get involved in the education of their children?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I applaud this member, not only for his question but also for showing leadership in education. Our caucus is filled with a number of leaders in education, which I think helps us with good education policy. So congratulations to you.

I think he points out today a very integral part of what we are planning to do in tabling a parent initiative, a parent policy, that helps us reach out and have more parents involved in our school system. I think he tables a very good example of why it matters in assisting with basics like literacy and numeracy and how parents really can help.

I'm going to suggest that a lot of the surveying that's been done recently tells us that about 16% of the parent population actually say they're involved in the school system, yet if we were to ask parents, half of them at least would become involved if they were asked to be involved. That makes a challenge for us and for our partner school boards. We need parent involvement and we want to do that the right way by extending and reaching a hand out to them and showing them how they can be involved in their child's life in school.

**Mr. Brownell:** Both during Education Week and throughout the rest of the year, I congratulate our province's teachers and school administrators on the fine work they do in developing the young minds of the future, but I know they can't do it on their own. School councils are one of the best ways to get parental input

and assistance in the operations, events and concerns of our schools. These councils help to open the lines of communication between teachers and concerned parents. This communication and co-operation benefit students in the end. I understand that, as a former teacher. Minister, can you tell this House what your ministry is doing to support the important work of school councils?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Our new policy also includes a \$5.2-million investment in parent engagement in our school system, and that matters for absolutely every school in our communities across the province: \$500 for every parent council, to assist them in being creative and engaging all of the parents of all of the children. It also includes a \$1-million grant that helps some boards, some schools, reach out to parents who perhaps need a little bit more help getting involved in their students' lives in the classroom. It also talks about a near-million-dollar grant that is specifically for school boards to create parent involvement committees.

All of us need to be creative. We want parents involved. We want them involved in great ways that actually help their own children succeed in the school system. We look forward to this kind of parent engagement. I thank the member opposite for showing so much leadership on this issue.

## NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** To the Minister of Transportation: Last week I asked you questions about the detours around Caledonia, provincial Highway 6, and you did not answer. You've had six days now to pull some information together. There have been reports of collisions on these back roads. Minister, will you inform this House and the drivers in the Caledonia area what you're doing to facilitate the movement of vehicles, not only around the periphery of Caledonia but also within Caledonia?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** The minister of aboriginal affairs.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Under standing order 36(e), "A minister to whom an oral question is directed may refer the question to another minister who is responsible for the subject matter to which the question relates." There is no relationship, Mr. Speaker. This was all dealing with transportation issues, and the minister responsible should respond and comply with the standing orders.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I would ask the Minister of Transportation if he could answer the question. No? Excuse me. I'll take it under advisement.

I have to ask the Premier, in this case, whose responsibility this particular issue would be. If it is the responsibility of the minister of aboriginal affairs, then he could answer it.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Speaker, I think, in fairness, there is some overlap in connection with this matter, but



if the question is related to Caledonia, the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, has principal responsibility for that file.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Then to the minister of aboriginal affairs.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I say to the member that I understand, as we all do when we have responsibilities for our local constituencies, how disruptive this dispute obviously has been to your community and to people throughout your riding. Believe me, this government is working day and night to work at resolving this conflict. As you know, we have asked former Premier David Peterson to come in, and he is in meetings as we speak. He has been discussing all of this with all the principals in this dispute. I would assure the local member that the issue of the barricades on these road networks is his first job, his primary concern, and that is what he's working towards: resolving that for you.

**Mr. Barrett:** My supplementary is to the Minister of Transportation. There's a big problem with travellers and tourists from outside the area. As you can appreciate, they are having difficulties negotiating these roads across Haldimand county. I talked to representatives of the Port Dover Board of Trade and the Jarvis Board of Trade. Turkey Point tourism is impacted. Hagersville tourism is impacted. Minister of Transportation, what specific measures will you launch to help our area throughout both Haldimand and Norfolk to accommodate tourist traffic, cottagers and day trippers who go down to Lake Erie? This is your responsibility, Minister, and we ask for some leadership on this roads issue.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** First of all, I want to say to the member that this is a temporary situation.

**Mr. Barrett:** Wrong minister.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** If the member would listen to me, when it comes to the rerouting of traffic because of this type of temporary barricading, the OPP obviously outlined and delineated where these detours are to run. The member also knows that our government has given assistance to the municipality directly to help them with this and many of the other associated costs this dispute has caused them. I would say to the member, we are working with your community on this, on the issues of transportation, and the other disruptions that have been caused by this dispute.

**Mr. Barrett:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would request a late show response from the Minister of Transportation on the roads issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You may file that at the appropriate time. New question.

1530

#### COMPOSTING FACILITY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Today the city of Guelph announced that it is shutting its organic processing plant because your government refused to

fund upgrades. Instead of focusing scarce resources on increasing its stellar 54% waste diversion rate, Guelph must now ship its organic waste out of the city, perhaps even out of the province. Minister, will you agree today to provide the city of Guelph with the \$2.5 million needed to rebuild its composting facility?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the issues facing the community in Guelph. I've had an opportunity to meet with the mayor and talk to her about the success of the wet-dry program, and I've indicated my support for the success of that program. But I'm sure the member opposite does understand that the Ministry of the Environment is not a funding ministry for infrastructure projects. In the supplementary, I'll ask the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who is responsible for the COMRIF program, which is the program that the community of Guelph applied to, to speak to the issues with respect to the application process under COMRIF.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Unlike the McGuinty government, the city of Guelph is a leader in diverting waste from landfills. After viewing Guelph's waste facility, your predecessor, Mrs. Dombrowsky, said, "Seeing your facility gives me the opportunity to say to those folks who are skeptical ... that I have been to Guelph and it is possible. I'm able to say, 'Look at what Guelph is doing.'"

Guelph needs \$2.5 million to keep that facility open and to keep leading Ontario in waste management. When is your government going to cut the cheque to allow that facility to continue operation?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm happy to have the opportunity to clarify for the members in this House exactly what has happened with, the excellent facility that I toured when I was the Minister of the Environment. The city has made an application in intake 2 of the Canada-Ontario municipal infrastructure program. That program is a jointly funded program, a federal-provincial-municipal partnership, and there is a joint secretariat that independently adjudicates the applications that come in. The Guelph application was adjudicated. The criteria used are with respect to health and safety, with respect to value for dollar and with respect to provincial priority. Unfortunately, because there were 366 applications, only 88 in round 2 were able to be accommodated with the dollars that were available. The project in Guelph did not receive its funding.

I would encourage the municipality of Guelph, which has been so forward-thinking with respect to managing these important environmental issues, to continue—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The question has been answered. New question.

#### HOSPICE CARE

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.



Your announcement yesterday of our government's further expansion of home care, and our response to Elinor Caplan's review of home care, was something that means a lot to patients and personal support workers in my riding of Perth-Middlesex. I want you to know just how important it has been for more of my constituents to be able to receive care in their homes rather than in a hospital. The hospitals in my riding provides excellent care to my constituents, but some needs are better fulfilled at home and in the community, which leads me to end-of-life care.

I was reading through Cancer Care Ontario's cancer care quality index 2006 last week, and I was disturbed to read about the state of end-of-life care under the previous Tory government. I read that home care services for end-of-life clients fell by 3%, that rates of ER visits went up by 4% and homes visits by doctors fell by 3%.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Question.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It just gives me more of a perspective on our end-of-life strategy that we announced. Minister, could you give us an update on that strategy?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It was with tremendous pride last year that I had the opportunity to outline our government's three-year, \$115-million investment in end-of-life care. What we're seeking to do is have the best integrated plan in all of Canada to provide end-of-life care to our loved ones. We want to be able to do that in the hospital environment, of course, but in addition we believe that there are tremendous opportunities to do more of that service in the place where people would most prefer to pass on, which is their home.

Our funding this year will see 1,100 additional people supported at home. We'll also see resources going to fund volunteer home hospices—those are volunteer-driven organizations that support people who are passing on in their homes—and of course funding for 30 residential hospices over the next three years.

Our strategy in the province of Ontario is viewed by other jurisdictions across the land as a leading one. We work very hard to develop a coordinated approach. I look forward to speaking more about residential hospices in my supplementary answer.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Minister, that is impressive. The time people spend at the end of their lives, when they are dealing with a terminal illness, is a time to reflect and a time to be amongst loved ones. It's a time that should be spent in comfort and dignity. There are times when government has the opportunity to really touch people's lives, and I feel that this is one of them. I'd be very pleased to tell my constituents about this initiative.

I understand that you're especially proud of one component of our end-of-life strategy, and that is the residential hospice component. Can you tell me more about what residential hospices will mean for Ontarians?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** When we had the privilege of speaking with other people about the network of residential hospices that we're building in Ontario, they

were very enthusiastic about it. For any of us who have worked with a local group supporting a residential hospice, we know that they have so much love on offer to our communities that it's just one of the best investments we can make: to help to leverage love of community.

This year, four additional residential hospices will receive funding support. Those are the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County; Sakura House; VON Oxford, which was been built with the benefit of assistance from Toyota; the Niagara Hospice; and the Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice. This is where I had the privilege of making an announcement earlier this year. This is on top of hospices that we're already funding in Waterloo, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto, Richmond Hill, Ottawa, Brantford, Milton, and very recently Roger's House, which is open in Ottawa.

Accordingly, we have a little more work to do. More hospices are coming to life across the province of Ontario. When this program matures in 2007-08, we'll have 30 residential hospices providing love to people at the end of their lives.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. During the last election campaign you promised, "As the province's largest employer, we will never use replacement workers.... A Dalton McGuinty government will lead by example by being an employer that respects employees." My question is, does the McGuinty government stand by that commitment to not use scab labour?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Hampton:** Since April 21, workers at the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board have been in a labour dispute with their employer. Twenty-odd scabs—you call them replacement workers—have been hired by management to cross the picket line. Your government, the McGuinty government, appoints half the members of the board at the Ontario teachers' pension plan. In fact, you have veto authority over the appointment of the chair.

Premier, can you tell me why the McGuinty government is breaking its commitment to these workers? Why are you encouraging the use of scab labour?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's a bit of a stretch, frankly, on the part of the leader of the NDP. We don't run the pension plan. We continue to honour our commitment not to use replacement workers as a government. This is a matter that the leader of the NDP may want to take up with the pension plan board itself.

1540

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The recent announcement of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority has been great use for Ontarians. People across the greater Toronto



area have seen success in our government's dedication to fighting gridlock in the growing 905 region. This is no simple task, but it appears as though the GTTA promises to make the greater Toronto area more transit-friendly.

We all know that we have maintained your ministry's commitment to meeting the transit needs of the greater Toronto area. With the subway extension to my riding of Thornhill and now the creation of the GTTA, it is clear that the McGuinty government is dedicated to providing real, positive change.

Minister, a recent newspaper headline asked, "GTTA Too Good to be True?" What are some of the positives that Ontarians can expect to see from the GTTA?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** Congestion is the major issue in the GTA and the Hamilton area. It affects our quality of life and it affects our environment. That's why our government has been making a record investment in transit and we are moving forward with the creation of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

The main function of the transportation authority will be to make sure that we have a long-term plan to address gridlock. We will also have a five-year capital plan and a five-year operating plan as we move forward.

The other issue is that we need to keep our goods and people moving, and that's why this is an important initiative, not just in the greater Toronto area but in the Hamilton area as well. We look forward to working on that.

**Mr. Racco:** Minister, my constituents certainly welcome the province's dedication to fighting gridlock in the region of York. As you know, the chairman and mayor for the region of York were present at the announcement. The government's commitment to expand the subway into my riding of Thornhill is clearly building opportunity for everyone in the greater Toronto area. It benefits Ontario, and more specifically the GTA, to expand the subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. From a financial standpoint, congestion is costing Ontarians over \$2 billion a year in economic loss. Not only will this extension allow thousands of people to travel easily, but it will also increase the standard of living in our great province.

Minister, considering that the city of Vaughan just yesterday released a study—Julian Fantino is the chair—where it proves that the biggest issues in Vaughan are transportation, at 16%, and health, at 5%, and considering that with the extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank the member for asking his question. He has been a big advocate, actually, for the subway extension that we are undertaking. This is the first-ever project that will cross municipal boundaries, so we want to thank him for his advocacy on that project as well.

The biggest issue here is congestion, which actually occurred because the previous government neglected

funding for public transit for a very long time. I said in my speech yesterday that in 1995 and 1996 we used to spend \$660 million on public transit, and in 1999 and 2000 we were spending \$68 million. Then it went down further to about \$38 million. That's why we see so much congestion and gridlock on our highways. But we need to keep our goods and people moving, and we are making the right investment and the right decisions.

## MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: You're probably aware of a rather big article in the Toronto Star this morning entitled, "Big-Box Showdown in Port Perry." In fact, it goes much further than that if you talk to the citizens of Port Perry; for instance, Doug Brown, who's with Shoppers Drug Mart, and local teacher Michael Steele, as well as the BIA members generally on the main street.

The downtown businesses work very hard at being customer-friendly and innovative. I might say that the Canadian retailer of the year actually has a business on the main street as well. They're concerned about the lack of any kind of direction in the context that we're in the middle of discussions of on Bill 51, which is a very tightly controlled Planning Act regulation.

Minister, do you have any advice to share with the municipality with respect to the big box development and the impacts on rural, small-town Ontario?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'd like to thank the member for this question. We view Bill 51, which is the new Planning Act, as a very integral part of the overall development of this province. We feel it's a method whereby, in effect, councils will be given much greater authority as to what kind of development they would like to see in their municipalities. It also gives them much greater control in a number of different ways they simply didn't have before. There's also, of course, the provincial policy statement that is quite clear and direct as to where areas should grow, together with the growth plan that was announced by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

We, on this side the House, take the planning of Ontario, both at the provincial level and at the local level, very seriously. I do not have any specific advice for that particular situation. We in the ministry will certainly look at it, but we believe that Bill 51, together with the provincial policy statement, the greenbelt and the growth plan will go a long way to deal with the pressures of development in this province.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Thank you for that rather uncomfortable response. I would say that most commenters on the bill, including our critic, have suggested quite the opposite to what you've just suggested here today. What they've said is that you're uploading the power to the ministry and downloading the responsibility to the municipality. But very specifically, it's not just this small town in Ontario; it's Clarington—a lot of small towns are



under the same pressure. They're going to consultants to look for advice. The advice is on the amount of commercial space per population, and there's no way of challenging these things. However, in Bill 51, there is a provision under section 2 that refers to the local appeal boards, and it's to make and design sustainable communities, in the general word of interpretation.

Minister, is there any mechanism by which the small businesses, the entrepreneurs of this province and of my community, can get the ministry or get someone to pay attention, or do they have to go the route of the Ontario Municipal Board to resolve this small-town Ontario problem?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** As the member well knows, he's talking about a two-tier municipality. There are certain responsibilities at the upper level, the region of Durham, and they will have to look at their official plan. The implementation of that is done through the official plan of the local municipality. Obviously, it's very important for these two bodies to work together, together with the provincial policy statement that we've outlined. The new provisions in Bill 51 help this kind of situation. I would suggest to the member that he talk to the local council and to the planning staff at the regional level, so that this kind of situation can be dealt with in a very efficient and correct fashion.

We believe Bill 51 is something that will help the people of Ontario, that will help the communities in Ontario with a greater variety of tools that are required in the proper planning of our communities, which we all know is extremely important for the quality of life we all want to have in this province.

#### HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. You might know that a particular business in the city of Timmins, called NorFab, has been working with your ministry for the better part of a year and a half now to get a permit for a highway entrance, something you would think is very simple in this province: to be able to get a permit to move a business. What has happened in this particular case is that the ministry has put up so many roadblocks and so many obstructions that the person who is trying to put the building in place has had to delay building the facility and has suffered a penalty from the company he was going to be working for, for \$150,000, plus, he's had to spend \$100,000 on legal fees and others to deal with getting your permit. He's now up to a \$250,000 of additional costs to deal with the highway entrance. Your ministry staff are putting all kinds of conditions on him. They're making it impossible for him to deal with it. I want to ask you today in this House, will you personally intervene with the ministry to make sure that Mr. Dutulion and NorFab do not have to continue down the process that now has lasted more than year?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** The number one priority is the safety of the highway and the safety of the people who drive on the

highway. We are working very closely with the company—I think it's NorFab, if I'm not wrong—and we will make sure we continue to work closely with them to address some of their issues regarding moving their business. The MTO staff, as far as I'm concerned, have been working very closely with them for the last few months.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time for oral questions has expired.

1550

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I want to announce that, pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

#### PETITIONS

##### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here sent to me by the good folks at the long-term-care facility in Tillsonburg.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I affix my signature, as I totally agree with this petition.

##### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the United States government, through the western hemisphere travel initiative, is proposing that American citizens require a passport or single-purpose travel card to travel back and forth across the Canadian border; and

"Whereas a passport or single-purpose travel card would be an added expense, and the inconvenience of having to apply for and carry a new document would be a barrier to many visitors; and

"Whereas this will mean the loss of up to 3.5 million US visitors in Ontario, losses of \$700 million, and the loss of 7,000 jobs in ... Ontario ... by the end of 2008; and

"Whereas many of the northern border states in the United States have expressed similar concerns regarding the substantial economic impact of the implementation of this plan; and

"Whereas the safe and efficient movement of people across the border is vital to the economies of both of our countries;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the establishment of a bi-national group to consider alternatives to the proposed border requirements and inform Prime Minister Harper that his decision to not pursue this issue with the United States is ill-advised."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign my name to it.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition. It reads as follows:

"We Demand Leadership in Land Dispute

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government was notified of this land issue over two years ago; and

"Whereas the standoff has been ongoing since February 28, 2006; and

"Whereas there has been no leadership from senior levels of government;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty Liberals start showing some real, consistent and timely leadership in dealing with the current standoff in Caledonia."

I'm pleased to submit this on their behalf through Kristy.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to introduce this petition signed by many residents in my riding, including Dave Molnar and Cathy Patrick. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

#### HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I want to thank Marilyn Ruttan and Kim Taylor of ReMax Wasaga Beach for sending me this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

Obviously, I agree with the petition, and I've signed it.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which I'd like to read.

"Whereas improving job retention rates has a positive effect on developing valuable work skills, confidence in one's abilities and creating a greater economic foundation for the province; and

"Whereas JobsNow allows workers access to valuable resources such as job-matching services, pre-employment supports and up to 18 months of job retention and follow-up services;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the JobsNow program continues to be supported by all members of the House; and that we work together to ensure that workers on social assistance find a meaningful and long-term solution to meeting their employment goals."

This is a good petition. It is signed. I concur, and I will affix my signature to it as well.



## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and,

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature to this petition, and I'm pleased to give it to Philippe.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being 4 o'clock, I am required, pursuant to standing order 30(b), to call orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2006

## LOI DE 2006

## SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 81, An Act to implement 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi 81, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2006 et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2006, I am now required to put the question :

On April 13, 2006, Mr. Duncan moved second reading of Bill 81, An Act to implement 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1559 to 1609.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldeep	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craiton, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Nays

Amott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Tascona, Joseph N.
Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill	Tory, John
Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakubuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 24.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2006, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

PROVINCIAL PARKS AND  
CONSERVATION RESERVES ACT, 2006LOI DE 2006 SUR LES PARCS  
PROVINCIAUX ET LES RÉSERVES  
DE CONSERVATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 11, Loi édictant la Loi de 2005 sur les parcs provinciaux et les réserves de conservation, abrogeant la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux et la Loi sur la protection des régions sauvages et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** When last this bill was before us, it was questions and comments of Mr. Marchese. I don't see him in the House.

Further debate?



**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** It's certainly a pleasure to speak in support of Bill 11, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005. This is actually a long-awaited review of our provincial parks legislation. As a matter of fact, it's the first review that we've done in over 50 years. The bill is intended to enhance the protection of our provincial parks. This bill will consolidate a number of bills into one act and will set a legislative direction for our policies around provincial parks. It is based on existing policies that we now have.

I know that members who have provincial or even national parks and conservation areas in their ridings will understand when I say that it's one of the greatest things that you can have in a riding. In my riding, I have the Pinery Provincial Park, which is one of the oldest provincial parks in the province and is along Lake Huron. We do a lot of activities in that park, all of them of a low impact to nature. We have camping and nature trails that we participate in. We have the wonderful sand dunes that lie along the lake and allow our constituents and visitors to walk through the dunes. We also have nature-based recreation and education facilities there.

My first experience with the Pinery park was as a child when my parents took us there to go camping. I'm the oldest of 10 kids. It might seem strange that farm kids would go to a provincial park to go camping. You'd think we would try to do something a little bit more urban-oriented and we would want to see the great world out there, but we found that that's exactly what we did see when we got to the Pinery park. As I said, I'm the oldest of 10. Camping was one of the things that my parents could afford to do. My dad was a farm equipment dealer, and the summertime of course was his busiest season. That meant he had to go to work. My mom and my brothers and sisters would be camping while he would go to work during the day and then he would return at night.

One of the great things we enjoyed was campfires. We would sit around the campfire with all my brothers and sisters and have singsongs. My dad played the accordion, which was always a great instrument at a campfire. Actually, I learned to play the accordion from my dad, and I continue to do that with my own children and grandchildren. It seems like an odd thing to do around a campfire, but it's a lot of fun.

We had a lot of adventures as kids. Like I said, it was an economical holiday, but it also allowed us to learn things about nature that we didn't necessarily experience on the farm. We carry on that tradition now. We go with our friends. We went from camping with my parents—of course once you camp, you fall in love with that kind of environment. It's the type of thing you want to continue to do. So as I got into my teenage years, we would go camping at the Pinery with other teenagers. We would give the enforcement officers a bit of a run, but we had fun with them too.

From there, I got my husband involved in camping. He wasn't of that nature, but he became a camper once we started to date, and our friends became part of that.

Then we would do things like go biking along the trails. That's one of the great things we can do in a provincial park as well, and in a conservation area. From there, after getting married, we decided to do much the same sort of thing and we took our children camping. In the early days, we camped with our friends and their children, and we camped in tents. We were still camping in tents and in sleeping bags. I have five children, and we had our system set up where we would go with my sister and her seven kids, and friends of ours with their number of kids, and we would create a circle. We would have lots all together, and we would put the tables in the centre.

There was a routine about camping with kids. In the mornings, the dads would take the kids out for walks after breakfast while moms did the cleaning up and made the beds, as you might say, with the sleeping bags inside the tents. We would prepare the meals for lunch and we would clean up after breakfast. Then we would take our children and do activities such as going swimming in the lake or going on the nature trails. We would do our lunch. Actually, it was a lot of work. For most of the young moms it was really a lot of work to do this, but it was a great adventure for our kids, so much so that now we continue to camp—of course not many in tents anymore. I can't really say I like sleeping on the ground anymore. I'm getting a little too old for that. My husband and I have a fifth wheel, and we enjoy the amenities of this small travelling apartment that we now have. But our children and our grandchildren come camping with us and we do much the same sort of things.

We still go camping very close to home. We're only 20 minutes away from home. The reason for doing that is because my husband and a number of our friends are farmers, and this is the way we can accommodate our children, have a vacation with them and still be able to have our husbands go back and forth to the farm. So they go in the mornings, they do their chores and then they come back and enjoy the rest of the day's activities.

We continue to do things such as have campfires. We continue to take our kids on bike rides and walks through the nature trails, and we have our singsongs and we do our campfires. We do things such as dry camping. For people who are not campers, who are not familiar with camping, dry camping means that you have no hydro on the site, no sewers. You may have a central site for water where you collect your water in a container, and you do your dishes from this container. As well, you do your cooking on a campfire and on a cookstove. When you're used to a lot of amenities, for some people it would seem an awful lot of work, but it's also a very enjoyable time. It gives you a chance to talk to your children, to get to know your children and to get to know your friends on a very intimate basis again.

**1620**

One of the things that also happens in Pinery Provincial Park, and is something I'm very proud of, is a group called the Friends of Pinery Park. The friends of the Pinery are a group of people who are very devoted to keeping the Pinery going. They do things such as fund-



raising. They have a centre, called the Visitor Centre, where they do a lot of their fundraising. They do a lot of education-type activities there. I've been told that this year the Visitor Centre won't be opening very soon because they have discovered mould there, but I am really hoping that will be cleared up very quickly because, as I said, the friends of the Pinery are a group of people who have dedicated themselves to keeping the Pinery as an ecological centre, and they continue to work.

One of the things that's provided for in this bill under subsection 9(6) is around transparency. Groups like the friends of the Pinery are always interested in how management plans work for such a facility and something such as section 9 is of great interest to them. I know they would appreciate the fact that section 9 requires at least one opportunity for public consultation during development of a management plan. That's where groups like the friends of the Pinery have a great opportunity to get involved in what is going to happen in the future to their park.

Bill 11 will make ecological integrity a priority, and certainly in the Pinery that is very important. Ironically, it's called the Pinery because pine trees were deliberately planted there—you can see them in the rows, very nicely done—but unfortunately they're not native to our area. So in order to create the ecological integrity that's necessary, we have a plan whereby we are replacing those pine trees with species that are native to that area. What that means is that we have opportunities—I attended last year with my granddaughter Christina and her class. Her class took the opportunity to go to the Pinery. While they were there, they had a chance to walk through and see nature and, of course, the naturalists identified for them the flora and fauna they were looking at. What they also did while they were there was to cut down some of the pine trees that are not native to this area. Again, the intent is to restore the ecological integrity of the park. So the community is getting involved in doing this.

Years ago, one of the other things that happened in the Pinery was an overpopulation of deer. Of course, deer going into the park are protected there. What happened was that they no longer had a natural enemy and were so overpopulated that the animals were starting to starve. We could have done something such as provided hay, and it was done, but what that does is domesticate them and that's not what we wanted to do. We wanted the deer to stay wild. So what we had to do was have a controlled hunt. What that meant was that our First Nations groups in the Kettle Point, Ipperwash and Stony Point areas were given an opportunity to do a bow-and-arrow hunt to thin the population enough so that the deer that are there will survive on the food sources that are there. It also meant the deer weren't going to destroy the natural fauna, because of course when they're starving they will eat anything they can find, and they were doing damage to the local native species. We needed to get that stopped and we've done that through these bow-and-arrow hunts.

What our children do now and what we want to do with this bill is protect the parks for future generations.

That's very important to us. I want future generations such as my grandchildren to have the same opportunities to get to know the parks, to do the bike rides, to go through the walks and the nature trails, to walk over the sand dunes and to see the lake in the same way that I did, that my parents did and that their parents did. Through Bill 11, we are able to protect the integrity of our natural parks and our conservation areas.

What has happened over the years that I've also noticed is that when my parents took us to the park when I was a child, people were cutting the lawns a bit, the lots that we camped in were cut, and there was an attempt to eradicate the poison ivy. We tried to make it very domestic, in a sense. That has stopped now, and I think it's a great thing. Now when you go camping at the Pinery, the grass is growing; the natural fauna, the weeds, are there again. The flowers are there again. We have reverted it to the natural state that it should have been in in the first place. So we're now seeing the parks as an integral part of the nature that we have in our province, and we want to preserve that. The bill does exactly that.

Another thing that I think we see as an advantage and why we should continue to work towards protecting our parks is not only for our future generations and the education of our own children, but there's an entire industry around ecotourism. I noticed over the years that more and more people travel to see sights such as our natural parks. There's a real interest in experiencing nature as it is and as it should be. So there's also an industry for my community and my riding that I feel will benefit all of us.

As I said, in supporting this bill, I find that we have an opportunity here to protect our parks, to consolidate the varying pieces of legislation that impact on our parks and our conservation areas, and we will be able to move forward in a way that will enhance those communities that have provincial parks in them, and conservation areas as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech by the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. She spent quite a bit of time talking about her family's experience with Pinery Provincial Park, I think it was, and also what sound like fond memories of family camping trips. I'm pleased to hear that she's enjoying the parks.

The last few years, I've had some personal experience as well: paddling down the French River out to Georgian Bay with my son Winston, and his friend and friend's father; and then, last year, being up in the Temagami area, the Lady Evelyn-Temagami-Obabika area. This year, we have big plans to paddle down the Spanish River, taking the train north of Sudbury.

I just wanted to give a brief history of why this bill has come about. There hadn't been a review of the Provincial Parks Act since 1954. There were some requests around 2001, one by the Wildlands League, for a review of the Provincial Parks Act, and there was also a recommendation from the Lands for Life round table back in



1998, recommendation number 10, which was that "MNR should carry out a broad public review of the Provincial Parks Act and the policies governing provincial parks and in particular, policies on permitted uses." The PC government of the time responded by saying, "MNR accepts this recommendation in principle. The board of Ontario Parks will be consulted on the concept of a review of the ecological basis of parks and protected areas system, the relationship of protected areas to the larger landscape and the policies of the parks system, and how this review might be carried out."

In terms of Bill 11, that's a bit of history. I think there's nothing too earth-shattering. The bill is more or less bringing into legislation a lot of policies and regulations that are currently the status quo, and we will be supporting this bill on second reading and looking forward to it going to committee so that anyone who does have concerns will be able to raise them.

In particular, I have had people e-mailing me wondering about motorized use in wilderness parks. Bill 11 will not open up wilderness parks to motorized use.

1630

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I wanted to make a few comments on the remarks by the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I've actually been to Pinery Provincial Park; part of my youth included spending some time in that park. It's interesting how the member related to her family's experience with that particular park. That's certainly something many of us can agree with. I know that my family was very much involved in camping as I was growing up. That was my opportunity as a young person, as a child in fact, to experience the wonders of our natural parks and provincial parks, and then of course, after becoming a city councillor in the city of Hamilton, acknowledging the fact that our community parks are something that people have a great passion for and a great sense of protection for. It's important to acknowledge that and to take responsibility as legislators for the protection of those parks and for the framework around which we protect those parks to be updated over time.

I think the member raised some interesting comments around preservation and protection and taking some of our parks from where they perhaps have degraded and upgrading them to current standards and standards that are appropriate in terms of protection of their importance in our history and in our future.

I want to mention that the member didn't touch on one thing that we've raised as a concern and hope we'll see addressed, perhaps in the committee process. Perhaps she might in her response address the issue of the minister's ability to take 2% of the park and designate it for a different use. Perhaps she'd like to respond to that, because it's something that I'm concerned about and I know others are as well.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for London-Fanshawe.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** Thank you for giving me the chance and opportunity to speak in

support of Bill 11. I was listening to the personal experience of the honourable member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex when she used to go to the park with her family, how much they enjoyed nature and the environment around her location. She mentioned that beautiful area that's dear to my heart, the Pioneer—

**Ms. Horwath:** Pinery.

**Mr. Ramal:** Yes, Pinery. I thought I was talking about Pioneer Village. We have one also in London, in Fanshawe Park, which is beautiful too.

The Pinery is a beautiful location, a place which attracts thousands and thousands of people every year. I want to tell the people of the province of Ontario that this bill is not going to change the status quo. As a matter of fact, it's going to enhance the ability of the government to protect whatever we have. It's very important to us. So I agree with the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who said it's very important for all of us to work together to protect our natural locations, parks and conservation areas. Many people of this province, when they have spare time, when they want to go on vacation and don't have much money, can go to the park to relax, enjoy nature, listen to the music of the water, of the birds, and also the music of the trees. By the way, everything in this life has beautiful music, and no music is better than the natural music that comes from nature.

It's very important for all of us to work together to protect and enhance our beautiful nature in this province, especially the parks and the conservation areas. I want to congratulate the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for her explanation and eloquent speech in support of this bill.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I appreciate the opportunity to respond. The legislation: There certainly are a lot of questions that need to be answered. First of all, I think one of the prudent things to do would be to complete the management plans for all the parks in the province of Ontario. Currently there are a number of parks that do not have management plans in place, and I think that the current government should look at that.

With regard to the third party's inquiry about the 2%, I can give some insight into that. Effectively what happens—and it works both ways. For example, if there's a mining site that takes place that potentially could be moved into a park, that will allow them to take that mining site, expand it into the park, yet take in 2% from another area. On the other side of that coin, if there's a protected area, if there is a bog that all of a sudden they feel should be included in that park, this will allow them to expand the park into that bog to protect that significant area and move another 2% out.

There are some significant problems with the legislation that need to be addressed. Currently, the addition of the words "industrial uses" has caused some real concern as to what actually an industrial use is. It doesn't define it in the legislation, although most people here, if they've read the legislation, would see that the definition of a protected area, by world classification, is threefold: no commercial logging, no mineral development and



prospecting, and no new hydro. What the legislation does, though, is specifically state that existing hydro generation can take place. The area of concern would be, and I caution the government to look into it, if there are large numbers of dams that have potential usage for hydro development at future times—there's the development of technology such as low-flow development—this may potentially eliminate the opportunity to use those dams in those park sites because they're not currently producing electricity. That should be something.

Also, the oil and gas aspect: It says the old sites can continue. But I see my time is done.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll return to the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. You have two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** I want, first of all, to thank the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his comments. He lives in a wonderful area of the province as well. To the members for Hamilton East, London–Fanshawe and Oshawa, I think one of the things we all agree on is that we have an opportunity here to protect something for future generations. The member for Hamilton East talked about going as a child, and I think all of us have experienced this, and we understand there's an opportunity here to teach our children respect for nature. That's very valuable. We have an opportunity to protect that so our children will learn what nature really is and why it needs to be protected.

The member for Oshawa talked about management plans and said there were parks and conservation areas that were in need of finishing their management plans. In the bill, under section 9, it says that "The minister shall ensure that the ministry prepare a management direction that applies to each provincial park and conservation reserve,

"(a) by the fifth anniversary of the day this section is proclaimed in force...."

So the intent of this legislation is to make sure that those management plans are completed, that they are in place and that we have them to lean back on, because it is important. I think we all need to have a clear indication and a clear plan of where these parks are going to be and how we will protect them, and the kinds of implementation and types of activities that would occur in those parks, because we have varying different classifications of parks. But it needs to be clearly spelled out for everyone what the intent is.

I want to say thank you to all the members for their response to my debate on this. I look forward to further debate on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I'm pleased today to be able to join in the debate on Bill 11, Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006. I would like to make the Chair aware that I will share my 20 minutes with the member from Oshawa, if that's okay.

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Ottawa or Oshawa?

**Ms. Scott:** Oshawa. Thank you, member for Ottawa.

This is certainly a bill that's been discussed at length. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka led off for the PC Party discussion of the bill. "The bill enacts the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeals The Algonquin Provincial Park Extension Act, 1960-61, the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and makes consequential amendments to other statutes."

There is a history of great provincial parks in Ontario. The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex shared with us her family experiences and the importance that brings to educating our young people and why we want to preserve provincial parks. Certainly the history of the parks stretches over 100 years. The PC Party played an instrumental part in that history: in 1913, the Provincial Parks Act. In 1954 we had eight provincial parks, and by 1960 we were up to 72 provincial parks in Ontario, hosting over five million visitors annually. It's important to note that.

**1640**

I have the great opportunity to represent the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, which is a wonderful area for parks, for outdoor activities. We like to share that with people who don't have the opportunity to live in such a treasured part of the province as we have.

Ontarians understand and welcome the value of protecting ecologically important sites and accessing the natural beauty of the landscape. The Kawartha Highlands Signature Site in part of my riding encompasses 37,587 hectares and is the largest park in Ontario south of Algonquin Park. My riding and the ridings of Parry Sound–Muskoka and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke all touch the boundaries of Algonquin Park.

All the local stakeholders recognize the protection of ecological integrity and the nature-first approach to the Kawartha Highlands as an essential, overriding priority. The Kawartha Highlands Signature Site did an extensive consultation; 1997 to 2003 was when the origins of that park occurred—the round tables, the recommendations with the Bottle Creek ANSI, or area of natural and scientific interest, and the Long Lake Barrens. They all recommended that a much larger area surrounding these protected areas be an enhanced management area.

We had the local municipalities, at the time the Burleigh Anstruther Chandos Cottagers' Association, now the North Kawartha Lakes Association, involved in the consultation project; the township of North Kawartha and then Galway–Cavendish and Harvey, which it also touches on. That's where one third of the protected area lies. They participated in very long discussions with stakeholder groups. It was the previous member of provincial Parliament from the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, Chris Hodgson, who was in the gallery today and is here this evening at Queen's Park, who worked to reach consensus on all appropriate levels of protection and traditional use of this area. Chris Hodgson undertook the focus discussion with groups and represented a broad range of perspectives in order to come to general agreement for the future of this site. I want to



bring that up and the fact that the Kawartha Highlands Management Advisory Board has done a great job. It is in need of some more members. I always mention to the Minister of Natural Resources that they need to have some more members on their advisory board so they can go forth with the important work that they've been designated to do.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Scott:** There are some. They're not full, though, Jeff.

I appreciate the member from Peterborough. He and I have been trying to fully complement the board there so that it can move on and have a quorum and proceed accordingly.

Some stakeholders have presented some concerns on Bill 11, and I think this is why we need to move it on to committee, to have some possible amendments made so we can get it right. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society has concerns with this legislation. They'd like to see the concept of ecological integrity maintained throughout the entire act. They're concerned that Bill 11 is silent on treaty rights of aboriginal peoples, and it needs to clearly state how municipalities should engage in the public process, which is consistent with the Environmental Bill of Rights of 1993. As I mentioned before, the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site is a good example of a consultation process that went on there.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which represents 81,000 members in 640 clubs across Ontario, is active in conservation of both wildlife resources and the ecosystems that support them. More than seven million Ontarians participate annually in wildlife-related activities, and they recognize the economic advantages provided by these activities. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has many concerns with this legislation, and specifies that its concerns are with the access to conservation areas. The Ontario Mining Association, which is here tonight, is concerned with buffer zones around the parks and the definitions of these zones, how big they might be and whether the Ontario Mining Association would be limited to finding new mines in order to carry out their work.

First Nations are concerned with this legislation, more in the lack of consultation and their roles in the creation and planning of the management of parks and conservation areas.

Independent landowners such as cottagers within existing parks are concerned about existing land use and permits. They have a legitimate concern and want to know what will happen to their property and their lifestyle. I know that's been mentioned by the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, but also the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site is a combination of recreational uses and private landowners. Access roads are a big discussion there and how they're going to be able to continue to get in and out of their properties: Will there be any roads built within the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site? We've a lot of hurdles to get over yet, but the intent is appropriate.

There were over 65,000 respondents when Lands for Life process was put into play. I think we're using that as an example of why we need some more consultation process in respect to this act.

In addition to the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site in my riding of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, I have over eight protected parks and conservation areas, and I want to ensure that any legislation affecting the management and protection of these parks is appropriate and sustainable.

In Bill 11, for example, recreation is excluded from the planning and management principles, despite the fact that MNR planning and policy for conservation reserves and parks includes recreation. Is this an oversight, or was there a communications problem within the government bureaucracy? Things like that need to be sorted out.

I want to speak about the Frost Centre and the sudden closure of the Frost Centre that occurred in my riding in July 2004. That centre had been in operation since 1921. In 1945, it was for natural resource management and became a ranger school at that time. Years later, when the University of Toronto grads completed Canada's foremost forestry school, the veterans returned to that. It was named the Frost Centre after the former Premier in 1974. Of course, Premier Leslie Frost represented the riding of Victoria-Haliburton at that time. It's a great name.

When that sudden closure happened—that was an education tool for outdoor education that we had there—people from all across the province and the country commented on the fact that they had been there and the valuable tool that was in educating their young people. The community got behind it with petitions with over 10,000 signatures, and we engaged in the process. I know the member from Peterborough was involved. The Frost committee was founded, and that committee has done great work. The requests for proposals are under study now. The Frost committee working group is still engaged with that process, which again is an example after which the government could pattern other models of consultation. They went out and did a lot of consultation with the public and business. They realized there had to be a responsible business plan and how it would fit the needs of the area. Thus, we have some parties interested in possibly reopening the Frost Centre in some capacity.

We're waiting for the government's decision on that. We hope it's positive. Certainly in the area that I represent, in the Haliburton region it's the second most economic income in the province of Ontario. It's a great economic engine up there, as well as the education tool that existed as the outdoor education component of it and was used by many schools and different school boards, universities and colleges. We hope the government is positive with that because this is all toward the preservation of what we want to see in Ontario. We want to enjoy our outdoors. We have to have a balance of enjoying it, living there and educating our people.

With that, I know the member from Oshawa wanted to comment on this bill. I appreciate the time I've been



allowed to speak to it and look forward to the fact that it will be going to committee for further comment and maybe some amendments that will make it even stronger.

**The Acting Speaker:** I now recognize the member for Oshawa.

1650

**Mr. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005 repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts.

Moving forward, there's an area that probably causes concern on both sides of this issue, and that is access to and utilization of Ontario's resources and those who are trying to protect them in separate fashions. I must say that the minister is certainly taking a bold step in trying to appease those sides. There are a number of issues in this area that need to be specifically addressed, though.

When you look at the parks act, for example, as I mentioned to the government member who was speaking earlier in regard to this, it specifically discusses certain aspects of the management direction. Yes, it specifically states that within a five-year period you have to have a management—it doesn't say "plan," it says "management direction." If she had looked further down at clause 9(3)(c), it "may include a management statement or a management plan." What that effectively means is that a simple statement of the intent of direction or the intent to review the park or the intent to protect the area or the intent to continue with the current process should be an acceptable management direction on behalf of the minister. It doesn't really give a full plan and lay it out, as listed, for a 20-year period, in clause 9(3)(b), where all these subsections are, where it talks about a 20-year plan.

Part of the other aspect is the huge cost load on the ministry. In order to come up with these plans, they have to go into each park and effectively look at the current growth plan for the forest or the bogs or whatever forest and fauna are in that area, and how they're going to manage or potentially manage those issues for a 20-year period. Some of the areas will certainly need review and some of the areas need to be discussed, as I hope to bring forward here.

A lot of people really don't know a simple question: What's the largest provincial park in Ontario?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ouellette:** No, it's not Algonquin; it's Polar Bear Provincial Park. Polar Bear Provincial Park is the largest park in Ontario.

The addition of industrial uses in the definition of a protected area is very concerning as to what that means. They've included the world-recognized definition of a protected area, and Ontario, through our government, achieved those requirements of the number of spaces as a percentage of the land mass. What is the definition? The definition is: no commercial logging, no new mineral development, no mines, no prospecting, no staking of claims and no new hydro development. Even in here, it specifically states that current hydro development in a protected area continue on.

The area I have concern with, that specific aspect of the legislation, is that in a number of the parks there are a number of dams or water-retention facilities that currently may not be being utilized for hydro generation. The dams are there; they're holding back the water. But if the government were to look at it, potentially, in the future, with low-flow development, they could be producing up to five megas. I know there were a number of inquiries at other facilities that had to be upgraded, retrofitted or reconstructed that potentially had the opportunity for hydro development and would still maintain the current facility or retain the same amount of water there. That eliminates that from the process, which causes concern, especially at this time when everybody is concerned about increased hydro costs and the impact on the forest industry. There's a large impact on the mining industry and on businesses such as General Motors in my riding of Oshawa.

I would hope they would take into consideration that the utilization of any of the current water retention facilities is included in part of that definition. I certainly hope that's reviewed by the government members, because what it does is eliminate possible usage of already existing facilities or sites in Ontario.

It also spoke about road access issues. I know I made some notes regarding this. Road access is one of the big areas of concern, in that utility corridors—it specifically states that it "will not be used for a period of five years or more." The difficulty with that is that the way Ontario is laid out, access to forest fibre for the forest industry is sometimes difficult. Sometimes they need to cross through a protected area, and they're granted a five-year period in order to access that. But unless they're clear-cutting, which is a practice that is not promoted in Ontario—it's actually a selective cut; they don't go in and harvest all the trees. Proper management would say that you go in and harvest a section of the trees at that time and then, at a later period, you go in as the forest matures. Effectively, you start off with about 2,400 stems per hectare in the black spruce forest, for example, and it slowly thins itself down. Over a period of time you need to be able to access this. What this effectively does is it gives you a one-shot opportunity to go in there to access some of those areas, and then you're done and good, which means you shut down access for a lot of the forest industry in a lot of areas that may have to cross some of these areas. I would certainly hope that they address that issue.

Also the size change, as the member from the third party mentioned, regarding the 2%, and I brought that up briefly: What that allows—I'll use the reverse, as I mentioned in my comments—is that if there's a site beside a provincial park which is significant, and it is suddenly realized that this area impacts or will impact part of the park, or potentially is developing into a bog or an area that needs to be protected, the minister can go into that area, expand the park by 2% into that area and possibly give up another 2% for some other purposes. But it's a two-way street in that it also allows, say, the mining in-



dustry that may be utilizing a gravel pit or quarry—which is not really the mining industry; it's the aggregate industry—to expand by 2% on the fringe of a park to capture some of that. Then the park takes space from another part of the area. That's probably the reason why that particular part of information is in there.

Some of the other areas that I would hope they would look at: For example, there is no commercial logging allowed in a forest. What happens in the case where a number of years ago there was what's called a blow-down? That's when mature trees are blown down in an area and then their fibre is lying on the forest floor. This is fine during the first year, but in a couple of years that timber dries out and becomes a hot spot for forest fires in the province of Ontario. The options are, do you go in and try to do controlled burns to control the area or do you allow the forest industry to harvest that blow-down and take care of the potential forest fires that may move into that area?

It's kind of a Catch-22 in that in Ontario we have a conscious decision that we put out all forest fires. We don't have burns that go out; the ministry will go in and try to put out any forest fire that's not a controlled burn. That means we're trying to control forest fibre to make sure the industry, whether it's the forest industry or just for safety's sake, is all taken care of. What should take place in that particular situation where a blow-down occurs? Should you allow the forest industry to go in and remove that or not? Most of the time it's "not," as in what has taken place in Quetico, and I'm sure the minister is hearing from the forest industry that this is a potential hazard, that it's going to cause a lot of forest fire opportunities. They're having a lot of problems with the same thing in Woodland Caribou Provincial Park as well, I believe.

As I mentioned before, the big concern is the definition of "industrial." There are a few industrial things that are listed there, but what is the definition of "industrial"? It hasn't really been defined in the legislation.

One other area that I should discuss: Oil and gas wells are specifically listed in this bill to be allowed to continue on. What the government members probably don't realize is that the gas wells, believe it or not, are holding tanks for the industry in Ontario. They will come in and put gas in those wells and they can hold it there and it can be utilized at a later date. Does that mean that that's an industrial usage or is that part of the usage or the intent of the usage of those sites found within the province of Ontario? We really haven't heard any definition in that area.

The speaker before me mentioned the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. There's a lot of concern for the Ontario Trappers Association, who more or less manage or farm the wilds of Ontario to make sure that populations don't reach peaks and lows, which are a natural occurrence. Actually, they kind of hit a flat line—to make sure that the animal population doesn't hit diseases where it passes and they reach large lows and things like that. What is the impact going to be in certain areas for

trapping? I know that hunting was mentioned in one section, that it was being allowed in existing sites due to regulations etc., but there was no mention of trapping in that same section. I would hope that the members take a look into the Ontario Fur Managers Association throughout Ontario and their concerns on this issue.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 11. I hope it goes through the committee process so that a lot of people can get a lot of answers to these concerns.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

1700

**Ms. Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make a few comments. I hope I don't sneeze during these comments. I felt one coming on as soon as the member from Oshawa sat down. Anyway, I'm going to try to get it all out. I want to make some comments on the remarks by the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock and the member from Oshawa. I think both of them spent some time acknowledging the need to move forward, the need to update the existing regime. It has been about 50 years since it has been looked at and addressed. Certainly I think everybody would agree that looking at this framework for protecting our provincial parks is extremely important. I think they both also have brought to the table a number of specific issues that need to be reviewed and resolved and given further thought. They also both have indicated a real desire to see fulsome second reading debate and also some scrutiny at committee. New Democrats would certainly agree with that. I know that our lead critic on this file has also indicated some concerns.

I was interested to hear some of the enlightenment from the member for Oshawa around the gas wells issue, something I certainly didn't know, and I don't know whether the government members knew about that either. He raised salient issues around the definitions of things like industrial use. He talked about concerns, for example, about cleaning up areas where there has been fallen wood to prevent forest fires. I thought that was an important point that needed to be raised. He also spent some time talking about the impact of the legislation, Bill 11, on for example the forest industry. We all know that the forest industry has been in the news a great deal in Ontario in terms of how they've been hurting not only from softwood lumber disputes and then resolutions and real concerns around that but also around the loss of jobs in the mills and in the north.

Again, I think anything we can do to make sure the committee has the opportunity to review this bill in great detail would be helpful. I know the comments of the members who have just spoken will be important in that discussion.

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I'm certainly pleased to hear the comments of both the member from Oshawa and the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I believe that their concern will be able to be addressed during the next phase of the bill. Certainly second reading of Bill 11 should be supported. Bill 11 is An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation



Reserves Act. It would enhance the protection of Ontario provincial parks and conservation reserves. I'm sure the proposed act is largely based on existing policy. There's no major material added to it.

I believe that all of us wish to see that our parks be improved and made better than they are because Ontarians use our parks significantly for recreation purposes. We certainly have an industry that parks cater to, and I believe that we should do anything we can to make it better.

I want to take the opportunity to announce in this honourable House that this coming Saturday in my riding of Thornhill we are going to do some tree planting at Pomona Mills Park, and I will be happy to report the debate that took place in this House to make sure that the people in Thornhill and Concord, my riding basically, are aware of the intent and the objective of Bill 11 and the fact that there is general support from all the members in this House for this type of bill. Therefore, I suspect that not only in Thornhill but all over Ontario—last week we did some cleaning up. Of course, next Saturday we will do some additional tree planting, which is a yearly event. I thank you for letting me say so, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Miller:** It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock and also the member from Oshawa. The member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock brought up in her speech the situation with the Frost Centre, where unfortunately in July 2004 this government suddenly, without any notice whatsoever, closed the Frost Centre. I think I learned through rumours that it might be closing the day before it closed. Within two weeks the employees were locked out and it was closed—no warning, no consultation. Unfortunately, to this day now it's still sitting empty. That was a centre used for outdoor education. I had the pleasure of attending it in both grades 6 and 8, a long time ago, and had some outdoor education stays there at the Frost Centre. It was a very worthwhile centre. I hope that the government hasn't forgotten about it and that the minister of infrastructure renewal will act and get something going at the Frost Centre.

On the topic of consultation, I've heard from the Mattawa First Nation. They are concerned that there hasn't been enough consultation to do with this bill, Bill 11, the parks bill. I want to make that point.

The member from Oshawa talked about park planning, and this bill does require management direction for all the individual parks and conservation areas. I would question whether the Ministry of Natural Resources has the financial capacity to actually carry that out. I have heard from interested people that the fish and wildlife area of the Ministry of Natural Resources is \$25 million short in its funding to be able to do a reasonable job at this time. So I wonder how the ministry is going to take on new responsibilities when they're not properly funding the fish and wildlife area at this time. That's something that is certainly important.

I'm out of time, but I would like to see this go to committee. We will be supporting the bill and looking forward to further input at committee.

**Mr. Ramal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me another chance to speak in support of Bill 11. It's important for all of us to continue speaking about it. I was listening to the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock and the member from Oshawa talking about the importance of this bill, but they have some kind of concern. I sometimes share their concern. They're elected to this place to represent their own people and to also voice their concern. I want to assure them that our government takes this issue very seriously. It's a very important issue for us. Otherwise, we wouldn't open it. The rules and the whole thing are in place. But it's very important for us, after all this technology, after life has changed, with so much different machinery, so many different diseases, so many different issues coming along with new technology, to update our rules and laws to protect our environment, to protect our parks, to protect our conservation areas.

I come from London, Ontario, which we call the "Forest City." We have a lot of parks, like Fanshawe Park, like Springbank Park. Many Londoners enjoy going to the park in their free time. That's why our government, our Minister of Natural Resources, supports us, the city of London, and gives us a lot of trees. For instance, last year they donated 5,000 trees, those trees being planted in many different locations in London to maintain the image of the "Forest City" of London. So this is part of our commitment to protect the environment, our commitment to encourage people to protect and enhance parks across Ontario.

As a government, we have to put the rules in place in order to continue protecting those parks, and also to protect the species that live in those parks—protecting the species, protecting the parks, protecting our environment, protecting our future in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Oshawa; you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the members for London–Fanshawe, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Thornhill and Hamilton East. Still, there wasn't a lot of definition. I think a lot of people have heard some concerns brought forward, the fact that we don't see it specifically laid out that a management plan has to take place, that management direction is an acceptable alternative. That could mean, effectively, the status quo. It may mean more, but we haven't seen it. When they find out the financial implications, it may not be something that's feasible or they may have to move over.

Some of the things that haven't been brought out include, what do you do in the case of Pinery park—one of the government members spoke about it—if the emerald ash borer beetle comes in, and effectively the way to control that is by cutting down the trees? If you have to go into Pinery and take out that Carolinian forest, do you go in there and take it out or do you allow the forest industry to go in and harvest it to utilize it as part of their fibre so they're not taking fibre from somewhere else? Those are some of the things that would now be



classified as part of the management plan. Is that actually part of a commercial operation or is it part of the management plan to deal with this issue? I don't think we've seen that.

1710

One of the other areas is that whether or not people realize it, in some of the parks there currently are land-owners who have patented land within those grounds, meaning they own the property. What is going to take place with them? There are always concerns from those individuals that they're trying to be kicked out of there, for something that was there long before the park was established. Are they still going to be allowed?

Also, as to the LUPs, or land use permits, that currently exist in some of the parks, I would really like to hear exactly how the government intends the LUPs to exist and continue operating, or is it going to be a case where they're going to be grandfathered, which means those individuals currently there, and then they'll be phased out of existence forever and a day, which means they're not going to?

Those are some of the concerns we're hearing from the other groups and organizations. I hope the government will answer those questions during this debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Horwath:** It's my pleasure to have an opportunity this afternoon to make some remarks on Bill 11, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, the long name of which is An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, as you've already heard through the debate this afternoon, it's very clear that in principle, in an overarching way, most members of this House I think would agree that the updating of this legislation is required. It's been about 50 years since there has been any substantive revision of the parks act. We, of course, as New Democrats also recognize that the act needs to be updated to incorporate the best scientific understanding of how to better care for and manage our protected areas. Things have come a long way in the last 50 years in terms of our understanding of our ecosystems and the way that we as humans interrelate with those ecosystems. So the time is now to take that understanding and that knowledge and the development of that science that has occurred over the last five decades or so since the act was last looked at in a substantive way and to bring that knowledge to today's practices. That's what this review, I hope at least, is all about.

Ontarians, of course, are very proud of our provincial parks. I think every single member who has spoken thus far on this bill has spent some time relating to or indicating or in other ways referring to the experience they've had in their own lives from a family perspective and from a member's perspective as people who represent ridings in which many of these parks exist. Although that's certainly not my particular experience, coming from more of an urban riding—I don't believe I

have a provincial park right in my riding—I do have other conservation areas and urban parks. When I was a city councillor, I experienced the real verve with which people in communities protect their parks. Parks and green space and wilderness protection is something that Ontarians generally are very committed to.

So Bill 11 is an opportunity for us to make sure our provincial parks system that has been built over the years in this province is stewarded very appropriately in the future. Although every party in this House has had an opportunity as government to have the torch passed to them and move forward with it, it's now time that we collectively look at what has been done thus far and figure out how to go forward in a way that really does show our commitment to the ongoing not only survival, but growth and thriving of our provincial parks and our provincial parks system.

Of course, that's not just the responsibility of government. We all know there have been a number of active participants in the protection and management of Ontario's parks. Many individuals, but also many groups, have devoted themselves over the years, over the decades, to the ongoing protection and betterment of our provincial parks and conservation reserves. They have played an extremely important role, and I don't think there's any way we can individually or collectively thank enough those people and those groups who have taken it upon themselves to sometimes, from their perspective, push us toward doing things in a more proactive fashion, but certainly always to be there as stewards of the environment, of our green spaces and of our future when it comes to the protection of Ontario's provincial park system. They've played a very important role and I know will continue to play an important role, not only in the context of what I expect will be happening, which is the significant committee debate or committee hearings around this bill, but also as we move forward into the future over the next several decades after this bill has been dealt with and in some form becomes legislation. I don't ever see a time when the people of Ontario, either individually or in the activist type of groups they've put together to work collectively, will not be taking responsibility for stewardship of our provincial parks.

I'm certain the government has already heard from many of those groups that are interested in the park system during the drafting phase of the legislation, but it will be extremely important for us to take the time aside—and important also for those of us on this side of the House, who haven't been at those discussions—to hear from those stakeholders during the committee hearings of this bill.

As usual, or as is not outside of the norm, the legislation is a start, but we think there are some places where it falls short. I think there are some key areas where it is important for us to acknowledge that there are some shortcomings, so we can not only touch on that in this debate but also address some of those issues in greater detail at the committee stage and hopefully with some of the enlightenment of other stakeholders and participants in that process.



One of the first and most important things I wanted to touch on is the issue of First Nations. I know it was raised very briefly by a previous member this afternoon. Bill 11 is silent on aboriginal and treaty rights of aboriginal peoples. Their potential role in the creation, planning and management of parks and conservation reserves is all but left out of Bill 11. That is a serious problem. It's a serious omission that the government really needs to reconsider. The bottom line is that there's nothing in this bill in regard to the co-management of protected areas, for example, with First Nations. We know that is something that takes place. There are opportunities or situations where co-management of protected areas currently takes place, yet the bill doesn't address those issues. These kinds of shortcomings, specifically around the active participation and engagement of our First Nations peoples, are extremely important. It's very sad to have a bill in front of us that does not acknowledge the invaluable role that our First Nations communities play in our wilderness areas, our provincial parks and our protected lands. Unfortunately, these shortcomings in regard to First Nations are really out of step with the new protected area legislation in other jurisdictions, which has come to reflect an increasing understanding and appreciation of aboriginal rights and interests with regard to protected areas.

First, to ensure that the rights of First Nations are properly respected, the act needs to include a clause that clearly states that nothing in the act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection provided for existing aboriginal or treaty rights of aboriginal peoples of Canada, as recognized in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. I know that the member from Timmins-James Bay and the New Democratic Party leader, Howard Hampton, have often talked about the lack of a non-derogation clause, and that's something that needs to be added into the legislation.

I think the other piece that's glaringly missing is in regard to section 8—that issue was raised already in debate this afternoon—the ability of up to 2% of a park to be removed from one area and added to another area. Again in regard to section 8—and I'm going to go through it in a little bit more detail if I have the time—the bill doesn't at this point, but what we would like to see a clear stating that prior to the establishment of a new protected area or expansion of an existing protected area, the minister is required to identify and consult with all affected First Nation communities whose lands or traditional territories may be affected by the establishment or expansion of the protected area.

1720

Again, in section 8 of the bill—which is on page 6, I believe—it talks about the "Disposition of land, less than 2% of the area." It goes on to say in subsection 3, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order dispose of an area of a provincial park or conservation reserve that is less than 100 hectares or less than 2% of the total area of the provincial park or conservation reserve, whichever is the lesser." Then it goes on to talk about "Disposition

of land, 2% or more of area." So there are two different procedures that need to be followed, depending on the amount of land, either by hectares or by percentage of the size of the park.

The second procedure: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may not order the disposition of an area of a provincial park or conservation reserve that is 100 hectares or more or 2% or more of the total area of the provincial park or conservation reserve, unless

"(a) the minister first reports on the proposed disposition to the assembly;

"(b) the minister tables the proposed new boundaries of the provincial park or conservation reserve with the assembly; and

"(c) the assembly endorses the proposed new boundaries of the provincial park or conservation reserve."

That's basically saying that if you're going to get rid of or change more than 2% or 100 hectares, it needs to come before this House.

I think the things to remember here are twofold: One is of course the issue of making sure that the consultation with First Nations and the participation with First Nations is built in. That's not here, and that needs to be done. But the other issue that my colleague from Timmins-James Bay mentioned to me is the concern that—we all know the way the election system works and the concerns that people have about whether or not in fact the members and the government elected actually make up a majority, or the real will of the people of Ontario. Even having things come to this House, when it comes to the issue of provincial parks, when it comes to the possibility of getting rid of huge swaths of our provincial parkland, there is some concern that the will of this House might not even reflect the will of the people of Ontario.

We have real concerns about whether or not that's an appropriate thing to even build in, the opportunity to get rid of over 100 hectares or over 2% of a piece of any provincial park in the province. It's something that needs more discussion, more debate, but certainly, regardless of whether you're talking less than 2% or less than 100 hectares, or more, the bottom line is that none of that should be done at all without the rights of First Nations being properly respected, and their participation fully engaged in any process that would seek to reduce or in any way change the configuration of a provincial park.

The other issue is that at present there is no provision in the bill to ensure that in the formulation of management plans for parks, opportunities for co-operative or joint management with local First Nations communities are fully explored. Again, the bill is silent on that requirement. What we are suggesting or we think needs to be in there—the government has spoken a lot about its commitment to its new relationship with First Nations, but here we have yet another piece of legislation that doesn't even contemplate the fact that the First Nations do have a role or possibly could have a role in co-operating with government in management of parks as new management plans are put together. I think that's another



huge omission, and one that the government needs to seriously consider. It is something that I think will be a completely lost opportunity at best, and at worst will be an insult to First Nations if they are aware that once again they have been forgotten in that process of putting together legislation that likely will affect their daily lives.

Further to the preparation of park management plans, we need to include a local First Nations representative who has indigenous or traditional knowledge to inform the park planning processes. So even if there isn't a park management plan or a co-operative, going-forward relationship in terms of the management, at least the plan itself needs to be developed with the participation of First Nations representatives, particularly ones who have got the traditional knowledge that will help inform that planning process, because there is no better knowledge, no better understanding, no better relationship, no better intimacy with the ecological balance in any provincial park than that which you would find that is inherent in the First Nations people who are living on and with the land in question.

There should also be an opportunity in the bill for First Nations to nominate areas of cultural significance in these plans. For example, an important fish or wildlife area, areas that are important to maintaining traditional ways of life, sites of villages and rock paintings should be able to be identified for protection. Such sites should be considered for full management by the relevant First Nation so they can ensure over the future that these areas are appropriately protected and managed by them as their specifically identified areas of concern.

The bill also needs to include provisions whereby new or expanded protected areas require the sharing of economic benefits from the protected area with neighbouring First Nations. Again, this is the issue of the extent to which the province is prepared to share the proceeds of the generation of economic activity with our First Nations communities. There have been, I think, real lost opportunities and real failures in regard to ensuring that the sharing of those resources is committed to. So we would just like to see that issue addressed and enshrined in the new legislation. We have a long history in this province of failing to consult and share revenues generated from the traditional lands of First Nations communities, and that's something we don't need to perpetuate again in Bill 11.

In 2004, the member from Timmins-James Bay introduced Bill 97 in this House, the First Nations Resource Revenue Sharing Act, which addressed this very issue. The bill was taken on the road to consult with First Nations. We heard excellent testimony at that time around needed amendments to that bill. Unfortunately, the voices of those First Nations communities that participated in the discussions with the member from Timmins-James Bay around Bill 97, the First Nations Resource Revenue Sharing Act, did not see the light of day and the job wasn't finished because the government wasn't prepared to move the bill to the next stage. So First Nations at this date are still lacking in their revenue-

sharing framework in Ontario, and that's something that really does need to be addressed.

People will recall—and I mentioned it already—that the government made commitments around their new relationship with First Nations communities, that they were going to establish this new relationship of trust and consultation, but we saw problems. We saw problems with Bill 210. Again, I know the minister worked very hard, after the initial outcry by First Nations about the lack of consultation, to rectify that. We also know that there was an outcry again when the LHINs legislation was brought forward, that there wasn't consultation with First Nations communities.

Now, here we are with Bill 11, and again there are concerns that the First Nations communities simply have not had an opportunity to consult about this particular bill. Notwithstanding that, almost three years into government, it's just more broken promises from the government around not only resource revenue sharing agreements but also other issues facing First Nations, not the least of which is the acknowledgment and respect that's needed if you're really going to have a true relationship of consultation and government-to-government discussion.

There are a number of other pieces of the bill that I haven't had a chance to talk about. I'm going to go quickly through some of the other issues. One is section 7, which is the "no motorized vehicles in wilderness class parks" issue. The current definition of "wilderness class park" has been used for decades and it basically states, "Wilderness parks are substantial areas where the forces of nature are permitted to function freely and where visitors travel by non-mechanized means and experience expansive solitude, challenge and personal integration with nature."

Bill 11 weakens this definition by replacing "where visitors travel by non-mechanized means" with the phrase "where visitors travel primarily by non-motorized means." I'm a little bit concerned that the change in wording weakens the definition of "wilderness class park" and could potentially affect ecosystems protected by wilderness parks and the wilderness experiences sought by those who visit them. This is another issue that we're flagging as needing some further debate, particularly some further review in the committee process, and we look forward to that. We believe that the definition of "wilderness class park" has to remain as it is and not as proposed in the bill, but we also have some acknowledgment that there might be exceptions that are required to this; for example, firefighting equipment. If there's an emergency that needs to be addressed, if there's a forest fire that requires mechanized vehicles to go in and take care of that, obviously that's something that needs to be dealt with.

1730

The other one I wanted to raise very briefly, because I am almost out of time, is what my friend and colleague from Timmins-James Bay called the lazy minister clause. It's section 9, page 7 of the bill. What he raised



was a concern that the bill indicates that the management plans need to be put together and that they need to have their plans put in place. But the bill basically says that if that's not done within the fifth anniversary date of the order that creates a provincial park or conservation reserve, then basically the existing regime is what governs the situation, the concern being that if we're serious about changing things, if we're serious about upgrading the current legislation, then let's do it and let's not put in false safety nets. Let's make sure we're committed to getting the job done and not give the minister an escape clause.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I generally think that the member from Hamilton East provided an interesting overview on Bill 11, which is the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. You look at the purpose of the bill: "The purpose of this act is to permanently protect a system of provincial parks and conservation reserves that includes ecosystems that are representative of all of Ontario's natural regions, protects provincially significant elements of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage, maintains biodiversity and provides opportunities for compatible, ecologically sustainable recreation." I think this is one of these interesting bills that will no doubt go to committee to have some hearings. There will be a number of individuals and stakeholders that are interested, as we all are, in this great history and heritage of provincial parks right across Ontario. Every government of various political stripes, over a long period of time, has had an equal share in moving and enlarging and creating more provincial parks in the province.

This is one of these bills where I see an opportunity of all three parties in this House coming together in mutual interest to look at this bill, because it's necessary, because this is a heritage, a very important heritage, that there is a common interest in for everybody in this House. The member from Hamilton East and my good friend the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock highlighted a number of key issues. This is one of those rare opportunities where I think we'll see all of us come together on a bill to provide parks and increase the heritage for everybody in Ontario.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** It's a pleasure to speak today in this Legislature about our provincial parks and what a wonderful natural resource they are. It is time to review and revamp this Provincial Parks Act. It's not been done since 1954, and anyone who has an interest in parks and outdoor recreation appreciates that.

During the previous Conservative government, we were very fortunate that the biggest expansion of parks and protected areas in the history of this province was undertaken. Not only do these resources attract millions of tourists annually to this province, but they also protect our natural heritage, and in fact our heritage overall, which is wonderful. Having said that, our heritage does belong to all of us. I would implore my colleagues opposite that while considering stewardship, they must also respect all key stakeholders in this debate and must encourage a thorough consultation.

What concerns me is that throughout this consultation process previously, only a total of 425 people attended open houses. Attendance ranged from as low as 31 participants to as high as about 62. During the previous Conservative government, when they undertook consultations, over 65,000 Ontarians were able to respond to Lands for Life and provided valuable input. So I would encourage members opposite, when this goes to committee, to certainly listen to all parties and not only make sure that this legislation protects our natural heritage and encourages tourism, but also make sure they listen to groups like the hunters and anglers and other interested groups, stakeholders' organizations and individuals.

It is my pleasure to address this bill, and hopefully we'll see it back new and improved.

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** I certainly want to add my comments to those of the member for Hamilton East. She was talking about the growth of our parks and the concern around the expansions, and she was also talking about the community members that enjoy all of our parks and conservation areas. As I said earlier, we have in my area the Friends of Pinery Park, but I know that all provincial parks have groups like the Friends. These are people who are very concerned about conservation in their communities. In my area, Carolinian forests are an integral part of the natural heritage that we have. The Friends are those groups that help to support that, that do the fundraising and try to make sure we can keep our parks and that they are sustainable in the long run.

I find that a lot of these people who are part of our communities and who do this kind of work do this in other areas as well. In my area, it's not a group that confines itself to the provincial park; they're usually involved in conservation projects all throughout the riding. I know I have people like John Russell and Ross Hayter and Alf Rider who concern themselves not just with the Pinery, but who are also involved in the Lake Smith conservation area. Those people are our conscience when we are dealing with these kinds of things. I know they work very hard to make sure we have these types of areas for our children and for the future. They work very hard to make that happen.

As was mentioned earlier, I think among all the parties we can agree that we want to protect our natural area, our natural heritage. We want to continue the sustainability of those. So through Bill 11, we will enhance that protection.

**Mr. John Yakubuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** It's my pleasure to comment on the speech by the member for Hamilton East, and I do hope she gets some remedy for that cold she's experiencing.

I think she raised many, many salient points with regard to the bill, but I don't think this is an overly contentious bill. I think there's substantial agreement that much of what is happening with this bill is something we can all support in principle. But I do believe there are some things that do require clarification, and the member for Hamilton East certainly articulated that with regard to some of the concerns she and her party would have with



regard to this bill. So I think, as we take this to committee, we'll be expecting some clarification on some of those issues to ensure that those points are clear.

There's one thing that I do want to talk about and that I'm pleased will continue to be protected in this bill, because we have, as you know, various classes of provincial parks. Algonquin Park is a specific class, and it is the only park, I believe, that allows the logging of timber resources in it. That is something that is extremely important to the people in my riding, and I'm very pleased that the federal government was able to negotiate a softwood lumber deal with the Americans this past week. The practice of logging in Algonquin Park has gone on from before there was a building here. It is something that has sustained many, many generations, and it is a use that is consistent with the other uses of Algonquin Park. I absolutely believe, and I would fight that issue tremendously if this government changes its tune on that, that logging will and should continue in Algonquin Park.

1740

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Horwath:** I want to thank the members from Peterborough, Nepean–Carleton, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their remarks.

I want to take my two minutes of response time just to review some of the issues that I thought were important to bring to the debate, most of them, of course, centred around First Nations communities. I know there are other members of our caucus, particularly our leader, Howard Hampton, who are going to want to speak to those issues. There are issues not only around existing treaty rights, but also around the opportunities to ensure that we're engaging First Nations communities in the process of determining what the park plans look like, what the access in and out of some of these more remote parts of the parks entails, and making sure that the existing situations are maintained in any future park plans that are put together. Also, there are issues around the lack of acknowledgment for First Nations' participation in things like ongoing management plans as well as revenue sharing; that's another issue that I raised. If anything takes place that creates revenue, we need to make sure that those First Nations communities are not only right there in the planning process but also in the sharing of any revenue that it generates.

As well, I talked about the fact that the establishment of new protected areas and/or the reduction of existing areas—the 100-hectare minimum or less-than-2% areas—are things that cannot simply be done by the stroke of a pen. They need to be done in full consultation with First Nations communities, again highlighting the fact that this government has dismally failed in its promise to make sure they're consulting with First Nations communities, and seeing Bill 11, again, as an indication that their comments around that consultation have still not been followed up. That's extremely inappropriate.

My time has now run out. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington):** I'm very pleased to be able to join in the debate today on Bill 11, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. Bill 11 is looking at the whole area of provincial parks and conservation reserves with a view to making ecological integrity the first priority as we move forward in planning the use that surrounds our provincial parks and conservation reserves.

Interestingly enough, this act hasn't been looked at in 50 years. As you can imagine, there's been quite an evolution in the last 50 years in the issues surrounding provincial parks. When the act was first passed, there were only eight provincial parks. Today we actually have 319 provincial parks, as well as 280 conservation reserves plus 10 wilderness areas. More than 10 million visits are made to our provincial parks each year by the citizens of Ontario and visitors from other parts of the world. So these are a very significant part of our natural heritage, and I think all parties are in agreement that it's time we look after these parks and bring the legislation around them up to date.

Of course, what has happened over those intervening 50 years when the act hasn't been updated is that there has been a significant body of practices built up at the Ministry of Natural Resources around how we manage our provincial parks and our conservation reserves. That's something that all three parties share in: building up that body of best practice. It's largely that body of practice which is being consolidated into law to ensure that as we move forward, those protections that are in place in policy actually become firm protections that are in place to protect our parks and reserves—that those are actually enshrined in law and not simply in practice.

For those of us who live in southern Ontario, it's also important to point out that we are not talking here about conservation authorities. Particularly those of us who live within the jurisdiction of the Grand River Conservation Authority know that there are a lot of places known as conservation areas. Those are actually administered by the conservation authorities as opposed to the province, and are not the subject of this particular act. Those of us in southern Ontario often get confused because the conservation reserves tend to lie in more northerly parts of the province.

When we look at the act, it does a number of things, as I said, regardless of the various details. It sets up, for all these types of areas, that the prime principle when it comes to planning is that we must preserve the ecological integrity of the parks or conservation reserves because we do want to make sure they are protected for future generations. The act, however, does recognize that they play an important part in the area of tourism. They often provide an important role when we're doing scientific research, because we have those natural areas that we can use as a benchmark for how natural systems really do work. We do know that, because of their tourism component, we also need to look at the economic impact of surrounding communities.



When we looked at the existing practice, some of the issues that have been raised here—the new act would prohibit the granting of new leases, new land uses, private land uses in the parks or conservation reserves. However, those people who currently have leases or permits for either private use or commercial use would be allowed to go ahead with the existing use. I think this needs to be made clear to allay the fears of people who lease land for a cottage in a provincial park. There are lots of folks who historically have been allowed to lease land for cottages in provincial parks. That sort of use would be allowed to continue.

When we looked at parks like Algonquin, which is very heavily used along the southern corridor, we knew it was important that we may need to develop new commercial leases. There are so many visitors to that park that in fact there are a number of commercial outfitters, eating establishments and that sort of thing, which are set up in the park to provide support to all those people who come for that great experience in Algonquin Park.

However, it's also important to note that when we look at some of those more remote parks and reserves—in fact, when we look at all the parks and reserves—we are explicitly prohibiting new industrial uses such as mining, logging or aggregate extraction, major electric power generation other than those that might be localized hydro generation for communities that are located near the parks. We are restricting the use. The one place where we will continue to allow some logging is where it has historically occurred in Algonquin Park. As the member from Renfrew correctly points out, we understand that commercial logging within Algonquin is the important economic lifeblood of a number of the surrounding communities, and we have no intent here of ruining those communities that have sometimes rather fragile economic bases. So we are being very sensitive to, first of all, wanting to protect ecological integrity, but also looking at what reasonable use is within that context.

**1750**

It has actually been quite interesting to listen to some of the debate as it has gone on. I think the first day this was under debate I happened to be in the House when the member for Timmins—James Bay was talking about the bill, and he expressed the concern that we were maybe going too far in restricting the wilderness areas to non-motorized uses. He used the example of his one-and-a-half-horsepower Evinrude. He wanted to be able to take out his little boat with his one-and-a-half-horsepower Evinrude when he went fishing. He was concerned that maybe we would be stopping that use. He actually struck a chord with me, because I used to have a close personal relationship with a three-horsepower Johnson when I was a teenager. So I understood his attachment to his one-and-a-half-power Evinrude.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Sandals:** Yes, I did.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Explain that.

**Mrs. Sandals:** It was on a very nice little Peterborough Pal cedarstrip. This was a vintage boat, I'll have

you know. It was an excellent little boat to putter around in.

So I had some sympathy with his desire to continue puttering up the river as he went fishing. I think he was probably quite accurately reflecting the concerns of his constituents and the way in which they might use some of the conservation reserves.

But then I was quite intrigued, because I was here the next day, and the member from Trinity-Spadina was speaking. The member from Trinity-Spadina, of course, expressed the concern that he was afraid of water and afraid of mosquitoes and actually—

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** Just generally fearful.

**Mrs. Sandals:** He just generally thought that going north of Steeles was a major excursion. I'm quoting him; I'm not imputing to him things he didn't say. It was interesting that he had taken a much different tack in interpreting the bill, which was to be, I think, rather alarmist in suggesting that the bill would allow ATVs, all-terrain vehicles, to be motoring around our conservation reserves. Clearly, that's an overly alarmist view of the bill. So it is going to be interesting to see, when the NDP come to committee, where they land on this whole issue, because we've heard quite different points of view.

One of my own favourite little parks is a place called Hardy Lake Provincial Park, which is between Gravenhurst and Bala, and is one that I think is never advertised, really, outside the Muskoka district. It's a day-use-only park. Before a lot of people discovered this park, you could park by the side of the highway and walk your canoe down into the lake and have a lovely little day trip canoeing and picnicking around the lake. Unfortunately, now it has become more heavily used, although still, I must say, day use. They've cut out the route where it was easy to walk in and canoe. But it's a lovely little park, locally used, wonderful for day tripping.

I think that's one of the important things when we look at this act: It recognizes a number of different sorts of parks. At one end of the extreme we have Algonquin Park, the granddaddy of all parks. At the other end we've got Hardy. Then you go farther north and into the conservation reserves, and they really are wilderness areas.

We need to set up different rules. That's why the act requires that there be an individual management plan for each of the parks, because it is important that we get it right for each and every individual park. This is definitely one of those one-size-does-not-fit-all. We want to make sure that's what we're providing in the act, so that there will be the facility for the Ministry of Natural Resources to work with local communities, to work with experts, to work with the people who are currently responsible for managing the parks, to work with the people who live in the communities that surround the parks, and work out a management plan that is sensible for each and every park in this province and each and every conservation reserve, because I think we are all agreed in this House that it's important that we protect our ecology, that we protect those natural places, that we



have a place we can all retreat to, but most importantly, that for future generations we preserve some of that natural habitat with which Canada, Ontario, originally started.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or his parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** Indeed I am dissatisfied with this afternoon's response from the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. Part of my reason is that on two occasions I've asked the Minister of Transportation about roads issues, not only within and adjacent to Caledonia but also throughout the riding of Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, for a total of four questions now over the last week. On both occasions the Minister of Transportation bounced the question to the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, although today the Speaker appeared to rule that he was to answer and then the Premier ruled that the Minister of Transportation didn't have to answer. Maybe some of that confusion will be clarified in the response this evening.

If the questions had been on the negotiations to remove the barricades, for example, I could understand how the two ministers would have an overlapping responsibility. Again, it would be appropriate for the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs to respond. That being said, my questions focused on transportation issues that fall within the purview of the ministry and the Minister of Transportation.

I'll repeat one of the questions in part. Argyle Street is blocked. Provincial Highway 6, the bypass, is blocked. I have requested what the Ministry of Transportation is doing to accommodate traffic, focusing primarily within the boundaries of my riding, Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

I feel that question period is obviously a fundamental component of our democratic system. It allows MPPs like myself the opportunity to ask the executive branch questions, and it's reasonable to expect that we would get answers from what we would consider to be the most appropriate minister. Roads and transportation planning are issues of the ministry, of ministry staff and the minister. Again, Ministry of Transportation staff don't

answer questions for the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Whether this symbolizes a trend demonstrated by this government on not only this issue but other issues, we've watched with dismay as the present government has played the Ping-Pong game on the Caledonia land dispute. I guess it was two months ago that I was told to go to Ottawa on this issue. I've been told that with respect to issues agricultural. The Minister of Agriculture and Food on many occasions indicates, "Go to Ottawa." It doesn't matter what we ask the government; we get deflection, what I consider some finger pointing and the blame game. It's so odd to see this approach become inculcated within the executive council itself. I asked a question about roads to the Minister of Transportation. The question is bounced to the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. I appreciate that the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs could respond if I had asked a question on that issue.

When my caucus colleague Mr. Runciman raised a point of order, the Premier indicated that on questions relating to Caledonia, the minister of aboriginal affairs is responsible. How far does this go? Do we see a title change: Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, Minister of Transportation, minister responsible for Caledonia? Do we include other towns? Do we work on the assumption that any question, regardless of content, that deals with Caledonia must be directed to the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs? Who makes that decision? Is it you, Speaker? Is it the Premier who makes that decision, which, from what I can see, seems to have occurred this afternoon?

I'm getting so many e-mails with respect to traffic volumes, very significant problems that have to be addressed: load-bearing of bridges, narrow roads, safety, reported collisions, signage and routing.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister responsible for aboriginal affairs has five minutes to reply.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'd like to answer the member as directly as I can, to tell him—I think he knows this—that the OPP have established the detour route around the blockade on Highway 6, and that in this case it would be the MTO contractors who are assisting the OPP with this redirection of traffic around the blockade.

The government has supplied two portable, changeable message signs in order to further notify the drivers of these detour routes. I'm sure the member is aware of this when we have detours such as this; I know I'm very familiar with them at home, when roads are washed out etc. Also the load restrictions the member speaks to for the two bridges are also then on these message signs, up to date, because of half-loads etc. The drivers are well-informed and directed by signage that the OPP, through MTO contractors, are providing. So that's the answer to his question.

Quite frankly, we refer to this as being a temporary situation. We are working very hard. As you know,



David Peterson is now the Ontario lead, meeting with all the groups in the communities and working to resolve this. I feel there's a lot of good will there. We're going to get this resolved. But in the meantime, both the OPP and the MTO are taking care of the road traffic.

**The Acting Speaker:** There being no further matters to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 2 mai 2006

### DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

#### Semaine de l'éducation

M. McGuinty..... 3463

M. Klees ..... 3466

M. Marchese..... 3467

#### Services aux personnes ayant

##### une déficience intellectuelle

M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur ..... 3464

M. Martiniuk ..... 3466

M. Prue..... 3467

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### Loi de 2006 sur les mesures

##### budgétaires, projet de loi 81,

*M. Duncan*

Adoptée.....3481

#### Loi de 2006 sur les parcs provinciaux

##### et les réserves de conservation,

projet de loi 11, *M. Ramsay*

Débat présumé ajourné..... 3496

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 2 May 2006

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Mr. Murdoch.....	3459
<b>Dalton family</b>	
Ms. Marsales.....	3459
<b>RenewABILITY Energy Inc.</b>	
Mr. Milloy .....	3460
<b>Forest industry</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	3460
<b>Greater Toronto Transportation Authority</b>	
Mr. O'Toole.....	3460
<b>Grape and wine industry</b>	
Mr. Craitor.....	3461
<b>Fort Erie Progressive Conservative Association of Women</b>	
Mr. Hudak.....	3461
<b>Northern Ontario</b>	
Mr. Gravelle.....	3461
<b>City of North Bay</b>	
Ms. Smith.....	3461

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Bradley.....	3462
Agreed to .....	3462
Mr. Bradley.....	3462
Agreed to .....	3463

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Education Week</b>	
Mr. McGuinty .....	3463
Mr. Klees.....	3466
Mr. Marchese.....	3467
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mrs. Meilleur .....	3464
Mr. Martiniuk .....	3466
Mr. Prue.....	3467
<b>Mining industry</b>	
Mr. Bartolucci.....	3465
Mr. Ouellette.....	3466
Mr. Bisson .....	3466

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Class size</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	3469
Mr. McGuinty .....	3470
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	3471
Mr. McGuinty .....	3471

## Hospital security

Mr. Hampton .....	3472
Mr. Smitherman .....	3472

## Long-term care

Mr. Hampton .....	3473
Mr. Smitherman .....	3473

## Committee witnesses

Mr. Klees.....	3474
Ms. Papatello.....	3474

## Public transportation vehicles

Mr. Hampton .....	3474
Mr. Takhar .....	3474
Mr. Caplan .....	3474

## Education

Mr. Brownell.....	3475
Ms. Papatello.....	3475

## Native land dispute

Mr. Barrett.....	3475
Mr. Ramsay .....	3476

## Composting facility

Mr. Tabuns.....	3476
Ms. Broten.....	3476
Mrs. Dombrowsky.....	3476

## Hospice care

Mr. Wilkinson .....	3476
Mr. Smitherman .....	3477

## Labour dispute

Mr. Hampton .....	3477
Mr. McGuinty .....	3477

## Public transportation

Mr. Racco.....	3477
Mr. Takhar .....	3478

## Municipal development

Mr. O'Toole .....	3478
Mr. Gerretsen .....	3478

## Highway interchange

Mr. Bisson .....	3479
Mr. Takhar .....	3479

## PETITIONS

### Long-term care

Mr. Hardeman .....	3479
Mrs. Munro .....	3481

### Border security

Mr. Ruprecht .....	3479
--------------------	------

### Native land dispute

Mr. O'Toole .....	3480
-------------------	------

### Macular degeneration

Mr. Craitor .....	3480
-------------------	------

### Highway 26

Mr. Wilson .....	3480
------------------	------

### Employment supports

Mr. Sergio .....	3480
------------------	------

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Budget Measures Act, 2006, Bill 81,</b>	
<i>Mr. Duncan</i>	
Agreed to .....	3481
<b>Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006, Bill 11,</b>	
<i>Mr. Ramsay</i>	
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	3482, 3485
	3493
Mr. Miller .....	3483, 3489
Ms. Horwath .....	3484, 3488, 3490
	3494
Mr. Ramal.....	3484, 3489
Mr. Ouellette.....	3484, 3487, 3489
Ms. Scott.....	3485
Mr. Racco .....	3488
Mr. Leal .....	3493
Ms. MacLeod.....	3493
Mr. Yakabuski .....	3493
Mrs. Sandals .....	3494
Debate deemed adjourned.....	3496

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Wearing of pins

Mr. Levac.....	3459
----------------	------

### Visitors

Mr. Bradley.....	3467
Mr. Bisson .....	3469

### Sexual Assault Prevention Month

Ms. Papatello .....	3467
Mrs. Munro .....	3468
Ms. Horwath .....	3469

### Notice of dissatisfaction

The Deputy Speaker .....	3479
--------------------------	------

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### Native land dispute

Mr. Barrett .....	3496
Mr. Ramsay.....	3496

Continued overleaf





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**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

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**Tuesday 2 May 2006**

**Mardi 2 mai 2006**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SECURITIES TRANSFER ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LE TRANSFERT DES VALEURS MOBILIÈRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 41, An Act to create a comprehensive system of rules for the transfer of securities that is consistent with such rules across North America and to make consequential amendments to various Acts / *Projet de loi 41, Loi instituant un régime global de règles régissant le transfert des valeurs mobilières qui cadre avec celui qui s'applique dans ce domaine en Amérique du Nord et apportant des modifications corrélatives à diverses lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on Bill 41?

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** I understand I may be the only speaker tonight, and I promise to be as brief as possible, given the severity and the difficulty of the situation.

We are here tonight to discuss Bill 41, which in its full title says it all: An Act to create a comprehensive system of rules for the transfer of securities that is consistent with such rules across North America and to make consequential amendments to various Acts.

It is, of course, modelled on the Uniform Securities Act, 2004, which was a joint project of all the provinces of Canada, and we are, not unlike the other provinces in Canada, coming up with a new bill to try to revitalize and reform a system very much in need of revitalization and reform.

The comprehensive rules we have or that are contained within the body of this act are for the transfer of investment securities, whether directly or indirectly held. That may not mean much to most of the population or probably to most of the people in this Legislature, but just to be sure, what it means is: The indirect holding system is the system for transfer of securities where an investor's interest in a security is recorded on the books of an intermediary, i.e., a securities dealer or bank, and that intermediary in turn has his interests recorded on the books of another intermediary through a complex chain of intermediaries that may span multiple jurisdictions. At the top of this chain is the central clearing agency, the

only intermediary in the chain with a direct relationship with the issuer. The clearing agency is either recorded as the owner directly or in the issuer's register or has physical possession of the securities certificates.

It's a very complex rule of law. It's a very complex financial distribution and financial holding system that not too many people are aware of. Of course those who trade in commodities, those who trade in stocks, those who frequent Bay Street, Wall Street or any of the legion other trading agencies around the world—the Japanese Nippon—will be very familiar with this.

We are attempting, as a government, to try to remedy the problems under the Securities Transfer Act, 2005. As per the briefing notes that the minister so kindly gave to my assistants because I was not able to attend—and I want to personally thank the minister for making these available—the Securities Transfer Act, 2005 is, in fact, not a securities law. As his own notes have indicated, and as the minister has stated, the Securities Transfer Act “deals with a very narrow element of the settlement of a typical trade in securities—the transfer of property and the payment of money that takes place in a transaction involving investment securities. Therefore, the Securities Transfer Act may be properly called commercial law.”

New Democrats have no real problem with Bill 41 as far as it goes. The problem we have with the entire initiative of this government is that it does not indeed go far enough.

### 1850

The standing committee looking into the Ontario Securities Commission met over a number of months and culminated in a report of October 2004. That is some 18 months ago. Members of all parties got together and listened to the various recommendations of lawyers, accountants, forensic accountants, people involved in the Ontario Securities Commission, people who were involved in their structure, and ordinary investors, and we made a number of very real and very strong recommendations to the minister which we fail to see in the body of this report. That is the problem: not so much what is contained in the 72 pages of Bill 41, but what has not been done by this government in the time frame that the government and the government members promised.

We heard, at the time when the all-party members got together in the Legislature, that we had many options available to us. The option we have chosen and the option the government has brought forward is indeed a very timid one.



We heard that the United States, our neighbour to the south, has two committees that oversee the trade in stocks and in the stock market. They have one that is based in the Senate and one that is based in the House of Representatives. Those committees are very strong indeed. I do not have the most up-to-date figures, but going back as far as 2001, they prepared nine complete reports on fraudulent transactions, on what needed to be done to strengthen Wall Street, what needed to be strengthened to help the ordinary investor. We in Ontario are very timid. We don't do any of those things. What we do is Bill 41.

I want to tell you as well that we heard the Senate and House of Representatives committees have complete oversight. They have a formula whereby those committees are given a great deal of money by the General Accounting Office—called the GAO—of the United States government, and that money is used to do prosecutions, investigations, oversight and generally make sure that when you do business on Wall Street, you are very carefully monitored, and if you transgress, you are fined and/or you go to jail. In Ontario, we don't do anything of the sort. We have Bill 41.

One of the people who appeared before our committee was Glorianne Stromberg. She made some very strong and very good recommendations about where we should be heading as a government with the bills related to the Ontario Securities Commission, and none of those have been followed.

I listened while I was in the chair the other day—you hear much more in the chair than if you are otherwise occupied in this chamber, because you have to make sure you're fully aware of what each speaker is saying lest they step beyond the bounds, so that you know exactly when to call the appropriate motions or the appropriate procedure or rules. I listened very carefully to what the minister had to say on that date, and he said that the other bills are coming. The other bills will be companion pieces in the future. But with the greatest of respect to the minister, I believe he has missed the mark, because the recommendations made to the minister by the all-party committee, which form the basis of Bill 41, contained much stronger resolutions than have been brought forward.

We recommended, in light of what Glorianne Stromberg had to tell us, that there be a five-year rotating committee, and although the five years have not elapsed, that's the only thing for which this government cannot be faulted. She recommended as well that there be effectiveness to the security laws. Those have not yet been enacted, and people in the Ontario Securities Commission and those who trade on Bay Street do not have the same security. They do not have the same laws. They do not have the same force of prosecution should someone transgress the laws.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** Break them.

**Mr. Prue:** Break them. Make them easy, eh? Break those laws.

She recommended an effectiveness security, and we do not have that in this bill. She recommended that there be an operations commission; no such operations commission has been set up. She recommended that financial services be brought under the control of the committee; that has not been done. She recommended that a government office be set up similar to the American GAO, and in fact that has not been set up. What has been put together in this bill is very timid indeed.

Other people came before our committee, and they talked about the role of the prosecutor-adjudicator. Ontario is the only jurisdiction of which I am aware—and there may be others, but the only one certainly which has any major trading capacity in this country or in the world—where the prosecutor and adjudicator roles are combined in one individual. It is impossible, I would suggest, for that institution to survive. It is impossible for them to be fair, because it cannot legally or morally be said that justice is done—not only done but seen to be done—when you have one person who acts as both the prosecutor and the adjudicator. The change to the rules in the Ontario Securities Commission that allows the new power of this person or this body to impose administrative penalties of up to \$1 million on those who are in violation of the acts simply makes it impossible to have a prosecutor and an adjudicator role.

I go back to my time before I was a politician. I go back to the 20 years I spent in the immigration department. I remember a time in that department when we had people who were called special inquiry officers, and I was one. I was both the prosecutor and the adjudicator at the same time. It was called two-cornered justice. I was in front of whoever was seeking to come into Canada, who may or may not have had someone defending them who was legally trained, or indeed someone at all, and the decision to both prosecute and to adjudicate rested upon me. I will tell you that the people who reframed the Immigration Act in the late 1970s, in 1978, saw that this was not a good system. It was not fair because it was indeed very near impossible for one to be both a prosecutor and an adjudicator.

In fact, the immigration department changed it to have two separate roles, one called the case presenting officer and the other the adjudicator, so that the justice was much more clearly articulated. A person coming before the adjudicator knew that that person was independent, and the person also knew that the civil servant who was acting in the role of case presenting officer was there to represent the crown, and that person had the right to represent themselves or be represented by a lawyer. It was called three-cornered justice. There was a remarkable difference that took place within that department with that one mere change to the law, going from two-cornered justice to three cornered justice.

I don't understand the great difficulty here. I do not understand at all why there is a reluctance on the part of this government or why there was reluctance on the part Mr. Brown, who was then the OSC chair—to sit on Coulter Osborne's report for over a year without doing



anything about it. That is the reality. People are very reluctant to move from a system which they understand, and in fact which they control, to a system which is fair to all parties.

I would like to quote Coulter Osborne. We all know him. We all know him as our Integrity Commissioner. But he is also a person who made, I think, probably the single greatest recommendation to the all-party committee looking at the Ontario Securities Commission.

**Mr. Tascona:** Read it.

**Mr. Prue:** Yes, I am. I'm going to read just a little tiny part of what he had to say. The Osborne committee summed up the arguments in favour of the separation of these two bodies as follows, and I quote it in its full context: "The nature of the apprehension of bias has become sufficiently acute as to not only undermine the commission's adjudicative process, but also the integrity of the commission as a whole among the many constituencies that we interviewed. Matters of institutional loyalty, the involvement of the chair in the major cases, the increased penalties, the sense that 'the cards are stacked against them,' the home court advantage, the lengthy criminal law-like trials, and the commission's aggressive enforcement stance, which will likely only increase over time, all combine to make a compelling case for a separate adjudicative body."

I remember quite clearly the member from Perth—Middlesex moving a motion in committee that was adopted by all the parties and which I believe is binding upon this government, that within one year, if the government of Ontario was not successful in combining or having one legislative body for all of Canada, this government would move on this process. More than a year—18 months—has now gone by. I don't see us any closer to having one legislative body for all of Canada, and yet nothing has been done to separate the adjudicative function from the enforcement function. That's a major failing, and I would suggest the member from Perth—Middlesex is hearing me. He knows he made the motion. He absolutely knows he made it.

1900

**Interjection:** He was there.

**Mr. Prue:** He was there, and we voted for it. That was probably the deal-breaker that got all of the parties together, and it has not happened. That's a major failure. Whether it should be in this legislation or in a companion piece, I leave to government, but without the companion piece, all I can say is that this bill is extremely timid in its approach.

We also talked during the committee—

**Mr. Tascona:** It's tepid.

**Mr. Prue:** Tepid? No, I don't think so. That's lukewarm. I don't like that. I think it's timid.

We also talked during all of those days with the committee about the self-regulating organizations, or SROs. The committee believed that this was an absolutely pressing issue that needed to be dealt with. All three parties voted that something had to be done with the SROs. We talked, and they talked and all of the

deputants talked that they had a huge conflict of interest. They were both a trade advocacy group and a self-regulation group; they combined the two. The committee and every single deputant recommended that they be split. There was a lawyer, and unfortunately I cannot find his or her name but I remember the quote. The body, which they call the IDA, "gives the appearance of being expert and impartial when, in fact, it is neither." That was the quote before the committee. It's true. The IDA is not expert, it is not impartial and it exists because the member agencies pay them. They have evolved along a line where they are nothing more than a trade advocate. Every single major decision, they merely—up until that time and, I'm sure, until today—parrot what their member agencies have to say. They merely repeat it. They repeat the line from the brokerage firm. That's what they do. That's what they're paid for. That's where they get their mandate. That's where they get their money. They parrot the brokerage firms. They also give legal advice to the alleged transgressors.

Has this government moved at all on this major recommendation? No, they have not. What we have is 72 pages of timidity.

**Mr. Tascona:** Tepid.

**Mr. Prue:** And my friend here thinks it's tepid.

Other governments have acted much more strongly. We certainly know the United States has a very strong system. But we also know that in 2001, the United Kingdom didn't come forward with the equivalent of Bill 41. They came forward with a complete revamping of the system as it related to SROs. They changed all of the existing SROs, which were merely mouthpieces for their organizations, which were simply trade advocacy groups, the same as in Ontario, into a single regulator. That single regulator looks after financial services, banking, insurance and the very supervision of the firms for which they were once the advocacy group. I will tell you, the problems in England are minuscule in comparison to the problems we are facing here in Ontario, trying to regulate and to police and to enforce the many infractions that take place under Ontario's current laws, the people who are trying to rip off, very simply and very expertly, the system of bonds and trading that takes place on Bay Street.

The committee asked that a task force be set up to review everything about the SROs. If there was not a single regulator in Canada within one year, one of the recommendations was that a task force be set up to review the continued existence of the SROs with the role of changing them, of modifying them, of moving them, of developing a system either like the United States or the United Kingdom. A year has come and gone, 18 months have come and gone, and the government has chosen to do nothing. We have instead Bill 41.

**Mr. Tascona:** Tepid.

**Mr. Prue:** Tepid. My friend likes this.

There's the whole issue of restitution. I want to read a direct quote from the standing committee about restitution. The standing committee recommended "that the



government work with the Ontario Securities Commission to establish a workable mechanism that would allow investors to pursue restitution in a timely and affordable manner, and that government report on its progress in this regard within 12 months." We're 18 months into it and nothing has been done in this regard. It does not contain anything within a single sentence of Bill 41, which has to be a major failing.

You might ask why I'm talking about all of this stuff—what's not in the bill. It's only because I am so severely disappointed. Back in October 2004, there was an all-party agreement and, I believed, a real opportunity to move this province forward, a real opportunity to make sure that people who go down to Bay Street and try to fiddle, people who steal money, people who rob pensioners, pension funds and other people of their hard-earned money in order to line their pockets would face the same consequences that they would in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, on Wall Street and in literally every other country on the face of this planet. It has not happened.

We can see what happens in the United States. We can see what happens to a company like Enron when it goes afoul. The prosecution has come down hard. We can see the court cases. We can see the people literally—I'll use the vernacular of the streets—spilling their guts to make sure they don't go away for a long time, turning each other in, with the multiple scams that took place around the Enron fiasco. We can see what happened, some would say, to poor Martha Stewart, who tried to fiddle the market, got caught and went to jail, in a time when we would still be investigating. We would still be wondering what she did. We would still be trying to piece things together and seeing whether a deal could be made. The United States, with all due respect to them—and I'm not the greatest apologist for that country, but with respect—

**Mr. Tascona:** He's running for governor now.

**Mr. Prue:** Who? Martha Stewart?

**Mr. Tascona:** Spitzer.

**Mr. Prue:** Okay, Spitzer is running for governor. Maybe Martha Stewart should run for governor too; I don't know. But Martha Stewart has already been prosecuted, has done her time, is already out and the appeals have been dealt with.

That event happened after we had our committee hearings. Nothing like that ever happens in Ontario. You can look at the whole range of the United States, from Arthur Andersen to Conrad Black. Conrad Black, who did a lot of his alleged transgressions in this country and in this province, has never been prosecuted once. He's never even been touched. He's never even been named. In the United States, in Chicago, you can watch him daily or weekly on the news, going down to the courts, because they are taking action, because they have a prosecution body that actually works. You can look at WorldCom, you can look at Adelphia, you can look at a thousand things that happen in that country and then you can contrast them with Ontario.

Just today, in section C3 of the Toronto Star, there was a whole article about the Royal Group. I think some people here are familiar with that. There it is on page C3 that they are still being investigated by the Ontario Securities Commission a year and a half after the fact. They are still being investigated by the RCMP. They are still being defended by the various SROs. No actions have been taken whatsoever. According to the article, they are not required to file any documents of their financial holdings or their financial transactions between 2001 and 2003, but if and when they are required to, the article went on to say, there may be some financial implications for their bottom line next year. That's the same as what happened with Philip Services, with Livent, with Nortel, with the 100 other groups that have, maybe or maybe not, been investigated.

People in this province are looking to this government to be less than timid. We're looking for something better than Bill 41.

I think David Brown said it best—

**Mr. Tascona:** You're wearing yourself out.

**Mr. Prue:** No, no.

I think the government has followed what the former chair of the OSC had to say before the committee back in October 2004. This government seems to be playing exactly the same card. David Brown, the recently departed chairman of the Ontario Securities Commission, believed that his organization's mandate, "was not to bring lawbreakers to justice," but rather "to promote the integrity of the capital markets and foster confidence in them." That's what this bill does.

#### 1910

We know that literally tens of thousands of people have lost fortunes on the stock market in Ontario. If it were purely a speculative practice where you put the money down and you think that a company—Barrick, as an example—is going to find gold somewhere and they don't find gold and you lose your money, I guess that's like a horse race: You take your chances and there it is. But if you lose your money when someone has fiddled the books, if you lose your money when someone has cheated the system, if you lose your money when the Ontario Securities Commission and the regulating body hasn't caught the transgressor, then you would indeed be very angry. There are tens of thousands of people in this province and many, many funds that they are very angry at because they believe they have been cheated, and our system certainly does not work for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk finally—and I'm going to finish, as I promised you, in about half an hour—about what Al Rosen had to say about this.

**Mr. Tascona:** He's a suit manufacturer.

**Mr. Prue:** No, no. Al Rosen is considered Canada's leading forensic accountant when it comes to all of this.

He said that, as politicians, we need to do three things to take the appropriate action, three important steps. First, we need to change the traditional power structures. We have to eliminate them, and Canada's accounting and auditing practitioners have to be "separated from the



rule-setters, to keep them from setting deliberately weak investor protection hurdles."

We have the same weak protection hurdles today that we had back in October 2004, when the all-party committee met and agreed that something major had to be done. When the minister came before the committee and congratulated us for having made very strong, very pertinent recommendations to literally change the system to protect investors, to protect the public and to make sure that Ontario did not lag behind every other trading company and every other trading floor in the world, he said, "Congratulations. We will implement it."

But Bill 41 doesn't do any of those. There is no companion piece. There is no time frame set out for the companion piece. The government is at least six months late on the recommendations made by the committee. That's the first thing. Mr. Rosen said it, and we as a Legislature have not done it.

The second thing he said is that "an independent Canada-wide enforcement (not regulatory) agency has to be set up to initiate proceedings against corporate scam artists. Simply put, the crooks are light years ahead of the provincial commissions in carrying out financial fleecings." We know that that is correct. We heard evidence, back in 2004, about the year before, when there were about 300 transgressions investigated under the Ontario Securities Commission in Ontario at Bay Street. That's about one per day. Once a day somebody is coming in there with a wonderful little scam to siphon money out of the market.

I would suggest that anybody who has any money in the market, either directly invested by them or if they have the money invested through a pension fund, should be extremely worried about the level of scams taking place in Ontario. Certainly, if they are caught in Ontario, virtually nothing happens to them. If they are caught in the United States, though, you can rest assured that they will be going to jail for a long time. And you can rest assured that if it happens in another country, be it Britain, the United States, Switzerland, France, Germany or anywhere else, there is an enforcement agency with teeth out there looking for them. In Ontario, we continue to follow Mr. Brown's advice that we are not out there to do enforcement action but simply to give a good image about investing in Ontario.

Lastly, Mr. Rosen talked about how the penalties for abusers have to be stiff enough to change behaviour. Many of the current penalties handed out are routinely treated as a mere cost of doing business.

If you look back at what happened before the Ontario Securities Commission when investigations have taken place, usually only two things happen. There is a requirement that there be some form of restitution, be it minor. They have to give back some of the money they pilfered. Oftentimes, those who have pilfered it are forbidden to trade in stocks on the floor of the Toronto Stock Exchange for anywhere from a month to a year or two years, and occasionally even life—but rarely life. It's usually a month or a year or two years that they're not allowed to trade in stocks because, you see, they have

been caught and they've been tainted and, supposedly, after a month or a year or two years, they can come back and be forgiven and go on with their nefarious activities, knowing full well that even though they were caught, they're not likely to be caught again.

We have before us tonight a very timid bill. What is it going to accomplish, these 72 pages? It says it right in the bill on the first page: "The rules contained in the bill address both securities that are directly held ... and those that are indirectly held," and that it was put together, and the recommendations were made, by the very groups that are contained within the Bay Street establishment. They all sat down and thought, "What's going to make this work better for us?" not "What is going to make it better for the consumer?" not "What is going to make it better for the investor?" not "What is going to make it better for the province of Ontario?" not "What is going to make it better for law enforcement?" but "What is going to make it better for us?" I'm sure this bill will accomplish everything that the drafters expected it to do. Unfortunately, it's going to do nothing for those people who have come to the province of Ontario seeking protection, for those people who have their life savings invested in the stock market, for those people who believe in the honesty of the free market system—and there are still many people who do.

We have an obligation to do so much more. If the minister is going to introduce a companion piece, let him do it immediately. Let him take the appropriate action, which is not the timidity of this bill. Let him take the action that is actually going to help people in Ontario.

Those would be my comments. Thank you very much for your attention.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tascona:** I promised my friend that I would comment on his speech.

**Mr. Prue:** No, you didn't.

**Mr. Tascona:** Yes, I did.

There are two parts here, and I'll be very brief because I want to be to the point. I think the reason there isn't a companion piece is because the Attorney General introduced changes the other day to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. They bifurcated the commission before. They separated the commission from the tribunal. The commission was responsible for investigation and education, and the tribunal was responsible for the hearings. Now he has moved the investigation and the hearings component back up to the tribunal, which is very similar to the Ontario Securities Commission, and he has the public education part back with the commission. It's very confusing.

There was a strong case to be made that there was an appearance, an apprehension, of bias with respect to the commission investigating and then the commission prosecuting. That may be one of the reasons they're not moving there, because they've moved in the other direction with the Human Rights Commission.

Also, I think the member is really getting at fraud in this province. One of the biggest areas, as I commented



last week in my opening, was mortgage fraud. That's something we have to look at very seriously, in terms of people's titles and seeing their properties taken away from them through fraudulently registered mortgages.

I think the member was very accurate when he talked about where we should go with this bill and where we have to go in this province with respect to fraud.

1920

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I just wanted to comment briefly. I noticed that the member for Beaches-East York mentioned the fact that the US has a very strong system. One of the things that this bill is designed to do is, in fact, to bring the security transfer regulations in line with the regulations that exist in 50 US states. In fact, we also know that just this last week Alberta tabled a bill which parrots the Ontario bill. We are beginning to bring securities transfer legislation across Canada in line with the US legislation. This legislation is specifically about modernizing the rules for transfers so that we bring them up to date with the current practice of electronic transfers.

But I noticed that the member spent a considerable amount of time talking about something not in the bill, which is looking at a single securities regulator for all of Canada. We understand that the committee said it would be nice to have this done in a year. Well, it's nice to have all sorts of things done in a year with interprovincial relations, but unfortunately when you get into the world of federal-provincial relations, Ontario can't always set deadlines. The Minister of Government Services has been working very hard with other provinces to bring about the single securities regulator.

I would like to note that I think we do have some progress here, because in the federal budget today, Minister Flaherty has announced that the federal government will now be supporting a single securities regulator. So while the progress is slow, I think we are indeed making some progress.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

I'll return now to the member for Beaches-East York, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Prue:** I thank the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and the member from Guelph-Wellington for their comments. The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford brought up a good point which I had not really thought of, and that is the government's about-face or turnaround in terms of the human rights commission, and he is correct. They have gone in a direction completely opposite to the direction they promised to on the Ontario Securities Commission. Perhaps that explains the difference in attitude or why it has not come about even though the all-party committee did make a very strong recom-

mendation and was supported in the recommendation by Justice Coulter Osborne.

He talked as well about mortgage fraud, and we know that that has been a very serious problem in Ontario and Canada. It is probably the worst form of fraud that can be meted out against a person because it can literally steal the house from under you. It's much more different and much more severe than ordinary identification theft, where you may be disadvantaged and the banks may end up losing some money, but certainly you do not find that your property and your major asset of your life is taken away.

I want to thank the member from Guelph-Wellington as well. She did talk about the United States, and, yes, I do hold them out to be much more serious as a country than we are here in Ontario in terms of people who break the laws—we have our jurisdiction here—around stocks and stock trading.

It's not surprising to see that Alberta has come on board. I began my speech with the very simple statement that we are doing the same thing as literally every other province because there was an all-province committee that made the recommendation that we are following in terms of this law.

In terms of the single regulator, I am heartened by the news. I did not see the budget, and I will read very carefully tonight what the new government has to say about a single regulator. But it will literally take years to accomplish.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

Mr. Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 41. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** The bill should be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker:** The bill has been referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1926.*



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Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim</b> (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)		Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George</b> (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto–Danforth	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	<b>Arnott, Ted</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra</b> (L) Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight</b> (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Sarnia–Lambton	<b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline</b> (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte</b> (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph</b> (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York North / York-Nord	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V.</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry</b> (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,  
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

## CONTENTS

**Tuesday 2 May 2006**

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Securities Transfer Act, 2006,**

Bill 41, *Mr. Phillips*

Mr. Prue ..... 3499, 3504

Mr. Tascona..... 3503

Mrs. Sandals..... 3504

Agreed to..... 3504

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Mardi 2 mai 2006**

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 2006 sur le transfert**

**des valeurs mobilières,**

projet de loi 41, *M. Phillips*

Adoptée..... 3504





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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 3 May 2006

Mercredi 3 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Last Friday I had the honour of attending the OPP recruit graduation ceremony, class number 390, a class of 84 outstanding Ontario citizens. I watched as OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface presented badges to 10 women and 74 men. These 84 constables come from very diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds and will be stationed in communities throughout our province. I want to mention that of the 84 graduating officers, 16 had previously been active members of the OPP auxiliary.

The significance of this graduation is reflected in the fact that Commissioner Boniface was accompanied by all of her provincial commanders as well as commissioned officers from right across the province.

On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I want to extend best wishes to all the officers and their families. I want to thank them for considering a policing career and thank them for choosing the OPP.

I want to mention in my statement the OPP vision, which is Safe Communities, A Secure Ontario; the OPP mission, which is Policing Excellence Through Our People, Our Work and Our Relationships; and the OPP core values, "Accountability, Respectful Relationships, Fairness, Courage and Caring, Continuous Learning, and Diversity."

While I have the floor today, I have with me in attendance Mr. Joe Francoz from Orillia and his grandson Tyler Godel. They're over here, and I'd like everyone to welcome them.

#### WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** I rise today to recognize World Press Freedom Day, but before I do that, I want to welcome my former colleague, regional councillor Jack Heath, and my constituent Bernadette Manning from Markham.

More than 500 publishers and journalists were arrested and jailed in 2005 for simply doing their jobs. Dozens remain in prison today serving sentences as long as 20

years. Founded by the United Nations in 1993, World Press Freedom Day is a time to highlight their plight and to defend the freedom of the press.

The press plays an important role in keeping elected officials accountable and the public informed. They keep governments and public institutions from operating behind a veil of secrecy and allow the public to make intelligent decisions about how they are performing.

Community newspapers play a valuable role in keeping Ontarians aware of successful government initiatives, as well as missteps and scandals. In my riding, newspapers like the Markham Economist and Sun, as well as all of the York Region News Group papers, stand up for our community and work to keep me and other politicians accountable.

Everyone benefits from a free press allowed to do its job. We are lucky in Canada that governments do not seek to shut out reporters. Every journalist wrongly jailed deserves our attention and our solidarity. I ask all members of this House to join me in calling on the federal government to push for change in regimes that hinder the freedom of the press.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** Yesterday the Minister of Community and Social Services released a consultation paper regarding the government's plan for services for the developmentally disabled in our province. This paper does not address how the most severely disabled will have their day-to-day needs met once they are moved out of regional centres across our province. Much of the paper is based on the assumption that these individuals have an able advocate—a family member, a mother or father—who is willing and able to speak on their behalf.

The residents of Rideau Regional Centre and its sister facilities are mainly in their 50s and older. Their parents, if they are alive, are older seniors with their own health problems. This government expects these aging parents to take on the responsibility for accessing services for their severely disabled adult children. We are talking about individuals with multiple challenges, many compounded by behavioural problems. The services they require are not widely available in the community, and tracking down these services is more than a full-time job. The regional centres have the critical mass of patients to

attract the necessary service providers for these very vulnerable citizens off ours.

On Monday, I asked the minister if she would meet with the Rideau Regional Centre Association when she is at Rideau Regional on Friday. I ask her again: Meet with the parents who have not had the opportunity to meet with her to date.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** This past weekend I had the opportunity to attend an event in my riding that highlighted the great strides made by Purolator in energy conservation. In 2005, Purolator, along with others, identified energy savings by using newly introduced energy-efficient lighting at its London terminal. The result is an impressive 40% reduction in energy consumption and demand, which exceeds Ontario's conservation challenge. As a result, Purolator was recognized by London Hydro. I was there to see London Hydro present Purolator with a rebate cheque and to personally congratulate Purolator.

Purolator has also made similar electrical retrofits at terminals in five other locations, producing a similar reduction in energy consumption and demand. All six facilities combined produced an energy savings that is equivalent to taking 45 cars off the road or planting 944 trees.

Purolator has shown that conservation can achieve cost savings. Fostering a culture of conservation is part of the McGuinty government's plan to keep the lights on for all Ontarians.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I rise today to speak to the McGuinty government's tax-and-spend policies. Specifically, I refer to Bill 53, the City of Toronto Act, and my concerns with the Liberal government's mandate that involves increasing taxes any way they can. Right now their plan is to let the city of Toronto do it for them. No one disagrees with the City of Toronto Act, but instead of finding ways to deal with Toronto's fiscal problem, the McGuinty Liberals have decided that the answer is to force the city of Toronto to reach inside the pockets of Toronto taxpayers.

As well, we all know that yesterday the federal Conservative government announced its first budget, which included 28 tax cuts to help Ontario families, yet there was nothing being offered in the last provincial budget to help Ontario families.

One of the ways the Liberals are pushing forward is allowing Toronto to add taxes on drinks and entertainment. The Motion Picture Theatre Association of Ontario stated, "If the city of Toronto adopts an entertainment tax, our patrons will be obliged to pay an entertainment tax to the city in addition to the amusement tax that they already pay to the province. In addition to this entertain-

ment tax, Bill 53 also allows for levying taxes on parking, liquor, and tobacco sales."

This industry made it clear that they cannot withstand three levels of tax on each movie ticket. Jobs will be lost and communities will suffer.

### 1340

Another example is the housing industry. They're afraid that the city will impose land transfer taxes. The McGuinty Liberals are saying that the mayor won't increase this tax, but will they add this to the bill? No. So we have to assume that, given the opportunity, this certainly will become a reality.

This is just another example of the Liberal government tax-and-spend solutions. The only ones who will get hurt are the hard-working families in Ontario.

### CANUSA GAMES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** The CANUSA Games event is an international sporting competition held yearly between the cities of Flint, Michigan, and Hamilton, Ontario. It's one of the premier competitions of its kind. Many other cities have emulated the idea of twin-city games, but it all started in Hamilton. Our games have been going the longest and the strongest.

Next year, Hamilton will host the 50th anniversary of the CANUSA Games. Since 1957 and every year since, Hamilton and Flint have participated in a contest where amateur sporting excellence, friendly rivalry and great camaraderie go hand in hand. It's great to see and experience the international friendships among the young athletes, coaches and community volunteers on both sides of the border.

The CANUSA Games emphasize participation, fun and enjoyment above all, in addition to the benefits of physical activity, fitness and the pursuit of excellence. Hamilton volunteers, coaches and staff are working hard on planning the 2007 CANUSA Games, their 50th-year milestone.

Today I sent letters to the Premier, the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and to all of our Hamilton area MPPs. We need to work together to ensure that the 50th annual CANUSA games receive the recognition and celebration they deserve. Let's be champions of teamwork and jointly bring Ontario's active support to this landmark occasion. Hosting such an auspicious event will require additional funding and resources. The spinoffs for Ontario are well worth it.

I look forward to meeting with my colleagues across the way later on this month. By working together as a Queen's Park team, I can see every ministry stepping up to the plate to deliver the best CANUSA Games ever in their proud 50-year history.

### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** Ever since the previous government refused to allow net metering and financial compensation for



renewable energy, small producers have been waiting for a signal from government that they are needed.

That signal came with our government's introduction of the standard offer program. On April 9, I took the opportunity to host 16 farmers in my kitchen for a meeting with the Honourable Donna Cansfield, the Minister of Energy. The farmers of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, armed with their own research, were ready to tell the minister about projects they were planning or had already launched on their farms.

In Lambton county, Christine and Jack Greydanus are ready to use cogeneration to produce carbon dioxide and heat for their greenhouses, and power for their local community.

Simon and Rick Willemse have been researching and charting wind speeds so that they can build a wind turbine and produce an entirely different type of crop on their farm.

The Baresich brothers and their neighbours want to develop an energy co-operative among farmers in their region of Middlesex.

Lou Jansen is manufacturing the agricultural heat exchangers that he designed. Two exchangers were installed in our own chicken barn last year, and the resulting conservation of both propane and electricity are very evident in our monthly bills.

The farmers also talked about using bio-digesters to harness the methane that is currently lost in their livestock operations.

If Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is any indication, farmers in Ontario are ready for this important shift in energy policy and more than willing to be part of the solution that will keep the lights on in Ontario.

### ENERGY POLICY

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Mississauga—excuse me—Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** The other part of town, Mr. Speaker.

Ontario families want to know that the lights will go on when they hit the switch. They want to know that they're getting value for their money without putting their children into debt. That is what the McGuinty energy plan is all about.

I am certain that every member in this House can agree on these four principles:

(1) We must make sure we have the infrastructure in place to support Ontario's long-term energy needs.

(2) We need to maximize our existing transmission and generation assets.

(3) We need to build new generation capacity.

(4) We must simultaneously create a culture of energy conservation.

These are the pillars of the McGuinty energy plan.

The plan is working. In just two years we set the wheels in motion to generate over 11,000 megawatts of new capacity, more than any other jurisdiction in all of

North America. This plan will leave our children a legacy of reliable, clean, affordable power, unlike the previous Conservative government. The Harris-Tory party failed to invest in energy, leaving our supply to crumble. We remember the result: blackouts, uncertainty and irresponsible prices that left Ontario families \$1 billion in debt.

The McGuinty government gets it. We know that Ontario families cannot afford to go down that road again, and we refuse to take them there. No matter how hard John Tory tries to drag us back to those bad old days, we're moving forward successfully into the future.

### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** In the history of mankind, a very momentous occasion took place in 1791, the writing and establishment of the Polish constitution, which for the first time in Europe separated the executive from the judiciary and gave more power to the people.

I know that little did the writers understand at the time what awaited the Polish nation. They experienced war; they experienced destruction; they experienced oppression. What did the Polish nation really want in 1791? Generation after generation was subjected to oppression. Today, as we raise the Polish flag out in front of this building, we know for certain that there is a free nation, a nation that has its destiny in its own hands. It can indeed structure its own future. So we all celebrate the constitution of 1791 today, and some of us also celebrate what Polish-Canadians have done in Ontario to maintain our economy and to exhibit the kind of work habits that all of us appreciate.

I'm delighted to introduce to you today in the gallery those people who have passed on the torch of freedom from one generation to the next, the Polish veterans, and also members of the Canadian Polish Congress and members of the Polish Scouting Association.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION

Mr. Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies / Projet de loi 109, Loi révisant le droit régissant la location à usage d'habitation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister wish to make a statement?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'll wait until ministerial statements.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2006  
LOI DE 2006 SUR LA SEMAINE  
DE LA SENSIBILISATION  
AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUEL

Mr. Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to proclaim Sexual Harassment Awareness Week / Projet de loi 110, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au harcèlement sexuel.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** This act to proclaim Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is in memory of Theresa Vince, who was brutally murdered in Chatham by her workplace supervisor. The first week of June has been chosen as Sexual Harassment Awareness Week because June 2 marks the anniversary of Theresa Vince's death.

The majority of women will experience sexual harassment at some point in their working lives. The objective of proclaiming Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is to raise and increase public awareness, to foster change in societal attitudes and behaviour surrounding sexual harassment, and to prevent another tragedy from occurring.

## MOTIONS

### CONSIDERATION OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Making the Grade.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bradley has asked for consent to move a motion without notice on Making the Grade. Is it agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that Bill 93, An Act to amend the Education Act, replace Bill 94, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement activity hours and board support, in the motion respecting the May 10 sitting of the House passed yesterday.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: To the motion that the House leader has just asked us to pass, which we did to accommodate him, I would ask for unanimous consent that we in fact give equal time to the bill he has just removed, which also was part of that program. The students who developed that bill worked very hard, so I think it's only fair that we commit at least an hour of debate to that bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Oak Ridges has asked for unanimous consent to include a certain bill. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? I heard a no.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** As you will realize, the previous arrangement was that there be one bill from each of the parties. I'm sure the member for Oak Ridges is aware of that and is being mischievous this afternoon. I shouldn't say that, because I'm ascribing motives to you. Sorry about that; I withdraw that.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 123. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Barrett, Toby	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Bentley, Christopher	Levac, Dave	Runciman, Robert W.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	MacLeod, Lisa	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Scott, Laurie
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Sterling, Norman W.
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Elliott, Christine	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	Watson, Jim
Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David	Wilkinson, John
Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wong, Tony C.
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve	Yakabuski, John
Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry	
Klees, Frank	Pupatello, Sandra	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 7.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.



## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### EDUCATION WEEK SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I rise in the House today to recognize the optimism and confidence that's building in the publicly funded education system. Teachers, parents, school boards and the McGuinty government are partnering to make students a priority.

During Education Week, schools across the province have good reasons to celebrate. The era of peace and stability is starting to reveal real dividends for our leaders of tomorrow. Every student is being given the Ontario education advantage through new programs, resources and staff, supported by a \$2-billion funding increase since we came to office—\$2 billion.

Appropriately, the theme chosen for Education Week this year is Making Every Student Count.

Durant la semaine de l'éducation, les écoles de partout dans la province ont de bonnes raisons de fêter. Cette ère de paix et de stabilité commence à porter ses fruits chez nos dirigeants de demain.

Depuis notre arrivée au pouvoir, chaque élève profite de l'avantage éducatif de l'Ontario grâce aux 2 \$ milliards que nous avons injectés dans de nouveaux programmes, de nouvelles ressources et du nouveau personnel.

C'est donc avec à-propos que la semaine de l'éducation a été placée sous le thème «Faire en sorte que chaque élève compte.»

In elementary schools we're reducing the number of students in our primary classes, providing teachers with training and resources and making the school environment safer and healthier.

Student achievement is on the rise. An average of 62% of Ontario's grade 6 students are meeting the provincial standard in reading, writing and math. That's a significant increase from the average of 54% when our government first assumed office in 2002-03. Congratulations to our students. Thanks to the hard work of educators and students across Ontario, our goal to see 75% of students achieving at the provincial standard by 2008 is within our reach.

These young students will continue to succeed as they make the transition to high school. Right now in Ontario an exciting transformation of the high school system is already under way. Through our \$1.3-billion student success strategy, students are being given greater respect and more learning choices. Students are also being more engaged in the classroom and supported in working towards all destinations after graduation.

I want to take just a couple of minutes today during Education Week to update the members of the House on the wonderful progress we've made to help every student succeed in high school. Our student success strategy is

making it possible for students to customize their education and continue learning to age 18 or graduation. Our government believes so strongly in this strategy that we've also set an ambitious goal to increase the graduation rate to 85% by the year 2010.

That is great news. This is a big leap. Just 68% of students were graduating when we came to office. I don't think we realized that that was the rate of graduation. We've already seen some improvement, with 71% graduating in 2004-05. It's a pledge to cut the dropout rate by half over the next five years.

The student success strategy will help us get there through important initiatives, including expanded co-operative education. We know that 25% more students took co-operative education last year alone compared to 2003-04. We've also heard from students, teachers and employers that they want more high-quality choices that link learning with the workplace, and that are relevant and beneficial to everyone. That's why we announced this year that students can apply up to two co-op credits earned after September 2005 toward the 18 compulsory credits needed for graduation.

During my first month as Minister of Education, I've been energized by the inspiring stories I've heard about the positive impact of workplace learning. In Windsor, in my hometown, I visited the Children's Safety Village of Windsor and Essex county, which partnered with Windsor Fire and Rescue Services to create workplace placements. This exciting co-op allows students to shadow firefighters in all aspects of their career, including training sessions, real-life emergency response and public education.

I also heard about grade 11 co-op students in Sudbury. They're learning valuable construction skills while working with a local contractor to build a small bungalow. In Niagara, a co-op student is gaining practical hands-on knowledge at a local dairy. And finally, at Queen's University in Kingston, a grade 12 co-op student is working as a research assistant in the cytogenetics and DNA research lab. The budding scientist is helping with clinical research lab work.

These are real students and real employers who are reaping the rewards of our expanded co-op education program.

We've also put other key components of our student success strategy in place over the last couple of years. More than 200 technological education courses were added and 500 current programs were upgraded, including robotics and community technology, through a \$45-million investment. There are now student success leaders in all 72 school boards and 1,300 new high school teachers, including 800 dedicated to student success programs in Ontario's schools. We funded 131 light-house pilot projects during the past two years through a \$36-million investment.

These projects are helping students stay in school, accumulate needed credits, take programs linked to colleges and encourage those who have left school to return.



Within the next year, Ontario's high school students can expect to start benefiting from several additional student success strategy initiatives. Specialist high-skills majors will begin to be phased into the regular high school diploma for students who want to excel in areas such as arts, business, information technology, construction and manufacturing. Yes, we are putting the arts back into education. New dual-credit programs will be offered so students can earn several credits toward their diploma through college, apprenticeship and university courses.

There is also proposed legislation that, if passed in its present form, would keep students learning to age 18 or graduation.

The McGuinty government is confident that the student success strategy will work. We understand there's more at stake than ever before for students to get a high school education that is high quality and meaningful, and prepares them for a variety of post-secondary destinations. By maintaining high standards and transforming our high schools, we're helping more students reach their full potential, because they can customize their education to match their individual goals and interests.

So we are not going to waver in our target of graduating 85% of our students by the year 2010. Imagine the entire population of the city of Waterloo wearing caps and gowns. That's about 90,000 people, the same number of additional students we want graduating by the year 2010.

En maintenant des normes élevées et en transformant nos écoles secondaires, nous aidons plus d'élèves à réaliser leur plein potentiel, car ils peuvent personnaliser leur éducation en fonction de leurs objectifs et intérêts particuliers.

Ainsi, nous ne dérogerons pas à notre but de voir 85 % des élèves obtenir leur diplôme d'ici 2010.

Ce serait comme si toute la population de Waterloo était habillée en tenue de cérémonie de remise des diplômes. Ça fait 90 000 personnes, soit le nombre supplémentaire d'élèves qui recevront un diplôme d'ici 2010.

**1410**

With a clear strategy and a bold graduation target, it's an exciting time to be in the education field. I feel fortunate to be the new Minister of Education when the Ontario government is totally committed to listening and engaging everyone in education. I can promise my colleagues today that I will continue to work in partnership with the education sector to build on this positive momentum.

I want to thank the parents, teachers, students, principals, employers and all other educators who put extra effort and time into giving us feedback and implementing these new, exciting programs. Working together, we're making education exciting for all students by providing them with the learning choices they need to succeed, and we are building a well-educated, highly skilled workforce that will become Ontario's economic edge in the 21st century. Ontario will prosper tomorrow because we're investing in the education of our youth today.

## LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Today it is my pleasure to introduce the proposed Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. This proposed legislation is another tool we will use to build stronger communities across this province. The proposed legislation represents the results of our comprehensive consultation with the groups that would be most affected by the proposed legislation; that is, both landlords and tenants.

Speaker, I would like to introduce, in the audience today, Mr. Dan McIntyre of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations. His input and extremely hard work contributed greatly to the reforms in this bill. He's sitting right up there.

We have consulted with housing experts to ensure that we took into account the current and future health of our residential housing market. All Ontarians need a safe, secure and affordable place to live, and that is why we are introducing proposed legislation that we believe is balanced and fair. The proposed reforms would give tenants, who are often our most vulnerable, more protection while keeping our residential housing market strong.

Let me provide you with some of the features of this most important proposed legislation.

For tenants, the proposed legislation would result in better-maintained buildings, a fairer annual rent increase guideline and a new above-guideline rent increase system for utilities and capital expenditures.

One of our biggest proposed changes to the rental housing system is the elimination of the unfair default eviction process. The Ontario Ombudsman wrote in his 2003-04 annual report that "the default eviction process has resulted in large numbers of individuals being evicted without mediation or a hearing on the merits ... such evictions may have disproportionate and oppressive consequences for vulnerable tenants: seniors, single parents with small children, individuals with disabilities and those for whom English is a second language."

Under our proposed legislation, all eviction applications would automatically go to a hearing or mediation. Adjudicators would have to consider the tenant's circumstances and, in the case of evictions for rent arrears, all relevant outstanding tenant-landlord matters.

As for better-maintained buildings, the proposed legislation would give tenants the ability to stop all rent increases until serious outstanding work orders or maintenance problems were resolved.

To ensure fairer rents, the annual rent increase guideline would be based on a real cost indicator: the consumer price index. Annual rent increases would be more closely aligned with increases in the cost of living. Another proposed change is to create a new system for granting above-guideline increases that would be based on real and necessary investment and that would provide for reductions once utility costs fall or capital improvements have been paid for.



With the proposed legislation, we would also help landlords protect their investment and offer incentives to them to maintain and invest in their buildings. Under the proposed legislation, we would lower interest paid on rent deposits by basing it on the consumer price index to reflect current market conditions. Currently, a landlord must pay 6% interest on rent deposits.

Our government would also create a faster eviction process for tenants who cause wilful or excessive damage or who are interfering with the reasonable enjoyment of a landlord's home. The proposed fast-track eviction process would cut in half the time required to evict these tenants.

The other goal of our proposed legislation is to promote investment to keep our rental markets strong. Our government wants to ensure that the healthy rental market we are currently experiencing continues. Ontario's vacancy rate is high. The vacancy rate in 2005 was 3.7%, and it is projected to remain that high until at least the year 2009. Average going-in rents are static or falling. In 2005, average rent increased by less than 1%—less than the rate of inflation. For example, in Toronto the 2005 vacancy rate for the least expensive apartments—that's the lowest 20% of the rental housing market—was 5.5%. As well, the average rent was \$726, just a \$1 increase over 2004. Since 2003, rent increases for these units have been below inflation. Tenants are benefiting from these favourable conditions when negotiating starting rents. The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would continue to allow landlords and tenants to negotiate starting rents on vacant units so that tenants could continue to benefit from the renter's market.

To help tenants even further, we would give landlords greater flexibility to offer rent discounts, up to three months' rent, to attract new tenants.

The proposed legislation would also encourage investment in the rental housing market by continuing to exempt units built after 1991 from rent controls. These provisions are and remain significant contributors to a favourable investment climate that would foster the renewal of Ontario's rental housing supply.

Of course, affordability will always be an issue for low-income tenants, and helping vulnerable groups such as low-income tenants is a priority for this government. The proposed legislation is but one part of our integrating housing strategy to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing across this province. This strategy includes our \$365-million total investment in the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program, the Ontario rent bank program and the Ontario strong communities rent supplement program.

Our final element of building a more balanced, fairer rental housing system is addressing the concerns that both landlords and tenants have with the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal processes. Both groups believe that much more could be done to make the tribunal more customer-focused and accessible and its processes more understandable. I will be working with the chair of the Ontario housing tribunal, Dr. Lilian Ma, to make this

happen. We will increase accessibility for tenants and landlords by lowering some user fees and providing greater assistance with applications. As well, to reflect the spirit of the new proposed legislation and the tribunal's new mandate, we will be changing its name to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

In conclusion, we are ushering in a new era of tenant-landlord relations with this proposed legislation. We want to bring balance back to Ontario's rental housing market and keep our rental housing market vital and robust. I think that this piece of proposed legislation will achieve these ends. I'm confident that with the proposed legislation introduced today, we will bring about the kind of rental system that will bring strong communities across the province.

## HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Earlier today, our government launched HealthForceOntario, a comprehensive and far-reaching strategy to improve our province's health care system by improving one of its fundamental components: its human resources. Shortages of health care professionals are a worldwide phenomenon, and these shortages, these challenges, will increase in the coming years due to factors like an aging population, an aging workforce and increases in chronic diseases.

Our government is determined to address this issue head-on. Our goal on this issue, on all issues, is to look at the bigger picture. Our health human resources strategy, HealthForceOntario, is designed to address Ontario's health care issues for the next five to 10 years. Three fundamental components: new roles, develop Ontario's health care workforce, and work for Ontario to compete for health care professionals. Four new health care roles: physician assistant, nurse endoscopist, surgical first assist, and clinical specialist radiation therapist.

1420

The second part of our HealthForceOntario strategy is developing Ontario's health care workforce. In order to do this, we will establish a one-stop centre for internationally educated health professionals to quickly, clearly and easily obtain the information and counselling they need.

The third part of our strategy is to better equip our province to compete for health care professionals. We want health care professionals the world over to come to Ontario and practise their skills here. We're also committed to giving international medical graduates increased opportunities, and we filled 200 spots this year.

Finally, we're going to aggressively recruit the best and brightest health care workers to our province through a marketing and recruitment body, including a single portal for all health job opportunities.

These innovative reforms will make Ontario a better place for health care professionals to work. But what's far more important is that it will permit Ontario to pro-



vide better health care to its citizens. They're the big winners.

I'm tremendously proud of HealthForceOntario. I know we will be seeing positive results from all these reforms for many years to come.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Responses?

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not sure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had enough time to deliver his address. We'd entertain unanimous consent for more time for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has asked unanimous consent for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to have more time. Agreed? I think I heard a no.

The member for Oak Ridges.

### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** After hearing the Minister of Education's statement, it will be obvious to all that the art of spin and substance is alive and well in the Ministry of Education.

The minister has the audacity to stand in her place and boast of an era of peace and stability. This rhetoric comes on the eve of a strike by 876 educational instructional assistants who provide care to special-needs children in 186 schools in the city of London and in Elgin, Oxford and Middlesex counties.

While this minister tells this Legislature that schools across the province have good reason to celebrate, Pat Wilson, vice-president of the local CUPE bargaining unit responds with these words, "We would rather be working than walking the picket line. Our struggle is about getting more time to devote to students, because the children deserve better."

While the minister proudly claims that every student is being given the Ontario education advantage, she, her predecessor and the Premier have turned their backs on children with special needs by refusing to invest in their special educational supports.

The minister and her government continue to spin multi-billion dollar numbers, but they callously ignore the individual needs of the most vulnerable children in this province.

Until the minister can stand in her place and announce that she and her government will keep Dalton McGuinty's promise to autistic children, their boasting will ring hollow to all who know the truth.

### LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** Here we go again from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, another bill presented in the House that will not reach the

objectives put out in the bill. As it was stated in the National Post on May 2—and I agree:

"Dalton McGuinty's Liberals—who never met a bad election promise they couldn't keep or a good one they could—will introduce a new rent control bill. It will not go as far as Mr. McGuinty promised during the last election campaign, it apparently will go some way to punishing landlords and tenants by taking away more of their rights to a free market in rents."

The minister said this will be good for all good landlords and good tenants, but this is not what the legislation is required for. This legislation was supposed to be required to deal with problem areas. In fact, in my constituency the greatest number of calls are from landlords who can't deal with the problem of bad tenants. This legislation will do nothing to help that situation, only make it worse.

Once again, I think the minister is pushing forward legislation just for the sake of meeting an election promise. The rental market vacancy is at a historic high right now—around 3.8%—higher than it's been for years. This legislation does not do what it's supposed to do. The proposed changes are unnecessary and would have a negative impact on rental housing. Why would you introduce a piece of legislation that (1) doesn't come close to meeting the McGuinty election promise; and (2) is going to destroy the market that has come full circle and is working without your government's interfering?

What can I say? I even hear that Mr. McGuinty's own cabinet ministers don't agree with this piece of legislation. Once again the Liberals are missing the mark totally.

### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I'm pleased to respond to the statement from the Minister of Health. What we see today is yet another announcement from the Ministry of Health, this time about health human resources. He announced new roles in health care but was short on details. How many more announcements will happen before we see these new positions in our hospitals and doctors' offices?

The minister also announced a new website, but Ontarians know, like the government's wait times website, that access to a website does not mean access to patient care. Again, how many announcements will we see before this website is up? How many before the centre is set up? There have already been over 20 announcements on family health teams, and those aren't doing so well. We hear that there are just a few in operation, so should we expect at least that many announcements?

One thing that makes me think there are going to be a lot of announcements before we see any progress is that there are no details, no dates, no timelines and, most importantly, no dollars. In fact, the minister today admitted in his press conference that he doesn't even know yet who will fill these new health care roles. And there are more questions that need answers: Who will be eligible?



Where will they train? What will they cost? Where is the Liberal plan?

Our party has a proud record on expanding the role of health care practitioners in Ontario. We created nurse practitioners. We expanded the role of registered practical nurses. Our government hired over 12,000 new nurses. We created the first new medical school in over three decades, the Northern Ontario Medical School.

The government is failing in its attempts to keep its promises to hire 8,000 nurses. We know and the minister knows that 1,000 of the 3,000 he has hired are temporary. Once again, the Minister of Health shows that he can hold a glitzy press conference with fancy backdrops. But when will he actually address the health care situation in Ontario?

### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** The Minister of Education begins by saying, “Student achievement is on the rise.” I want to tell you how—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Marchese:** I want to tell the Liberals how they have achieved this. Here’s how they’ve done it: They have manipulated the test. What they’ve done is, they have reduced the testing time from 12 hours to six hours. They have increased multiple-choice questions to more than ever before, and on the multiple-choice questions they have now allowed for the use of calculators. In spite of the denials of the minister and the EQAO, they have made the tests simpler, and that’s how they are able to get an increase in student achievement. I guarantee that their numbers are going to go up this year and next year because they will continue to manipulate the test.

The reality is this: ESL students are being short-changed. We have more ESL students than we’ve ever had, yet we have fewer and fewer ESL classes. We have school boards robbing from different programs to provide for special education because the money that should be given to special ed is simply not enough. More and more of our boards are having deficits than ever before, and they’re having to cut vital programs to make ends meet. The transportation funding formula that needed to be changed has still not been changed. School boards are crying for more money for the teacher salary line that’s causing deficits, and the government that promised to fix the Conservative funding formula has yet to do this. They have not changed that formula.

Our educational system is in trouble. They need support. In spite of all this blah, blah, blah from this minister and this government, our student needs need to be addressed, and the Liberals are simply not doing it.

### LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Then we go to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I want to say this

for your benefit and the benefit of the rump here. “Here’s a promise: We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone.” That was a Liberal promise. Here’s another promise.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Marchese:** The other promise this government—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, please take a seat. Stop the clock. I would like the government side to come to order while this member has the floor.

The member for Trinity–Spadina.

1430

**Mr. Marchese:** Here is the other promise: “Ontario Liberals will restore real rent controls and provide a variety of measures to protect tenants. The Liberal plan is clear. We will bring in real rent control legislation within one year.”

Today’s announcement was an egregious betrayal of those promises. They have maintained vacancy decontrol, and what does it mean? It means every time a tenant leaves, they get whacked by increases in rents. The theory is that with an increased supply of units, the market will drive rents down. The reality is that rents have been increasing across Ontario whether the vacancy rate is high or low. Rents for two-bedroom apartments increased in Kitchener by 26.5% between 1998 and 2005, while the vacancy rate mostly increased. That’s what tenants are facing in this province. It is an egregious betrayal of tenants.

Not only that, this government says it is going to fast-track the eviction process. Imagine that—fast-track the eviction process. Let me tell you the current reality: 92% of all applications heard at the tribunal are from landlords. In 2005, the tribunal processed close to 70,000 applications to evict tenants from their homes. And this minister says, “We’re going to fast-track the eviction process even more.” The tenants have a lot to thank you for, Minister, and we’re looking forward to debating your bill.

### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the statement by the minister, there are concerns expressed today by RNAO and ONA that the position of physician assistant will not be regulated. That’s why they say today, “There is a lot we don’t know about how this new role will function, how it will be regulated and what protection exists for patients if they have a complaint about the ... care they receive.”

Here’s a second concern that’s been raised by both ONA and RNAO with respect to this recruitment from abroad: “‘This is a negative signal for nurses here at home,’ emphasizes Doris Grinspun, RNAO executive director. ‘It is a signal that the McGuinty government has become distracted with quick fixes to the nursing shortage and is not addressing the serious shortcomings On-



tario nurses are facing. The focus must be on homemade solutions rather than looking at luring nurses from other, often more needy, countries.”

Lots of concerns were expressed with this announcement today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. As I travel the province, people from all walks of life are telling me that they are working harder than ever but are falling further behind. They point to the McGuinty health tax. They point to the skyrocketing hydro rates. They point to soaring property assessments occurring on your watch. Their experience is, of course, that all of these charges, which are directly or indirectly your responsibility, are more than exceeding the modest wage increases they have been receiving.

Yesterday, the government of Canada brought in 29 separate forms of tax relief that will benefit every single resident of Ontario. This included a cut in the GST, an employment tax credit for working Ontarians, help for students with their books, and even a physical fitness and sports tax credit, which your Minister of Health Promotion likes even if you don't.

Can the Premier confirm that he supports all of this tax relief given to Ontarians in yesterday's budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I am delighted to receive the question, and I hope that the leader of the official opposition and his colleagues will take note of what happens when a government is preceded by another government which acted in a fiscally responsible fashion. This Prime Minister Harper government inherited a wonderful legacy from the previous government and found itself in a very strong fiscal position.

Contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with what you and I inherited on this side of the House when we first formed the government. We inherited a fiscal mess, which was the result of determined and dedicated irresponsibility on the part of the previous government. We ended up drowning in a deficit. The federal Tories ended up swimming in cash. Believe me, I envy their state of affairs and I only wish on behalf of the people of Ontario that the previous government had acted responsibly when dealing with their money.

**Mr. Tory:** Only this Premier could call the sponsorship scandal and the hundreds of millions of dollars that were defrauded from Canadian taxpayers strong fiscal management on the part of the previous Liberal government.

That was a very interesting dissertation from the Premier, but let's try answering the question.

Yesterday, the government of Canada brought in 29 forms of tax relief for Ontario residents and others across

the country. I'll name three or four of them: an employment tax credit; a tax credit for workers for their tools; a tax credit for students for their books; a physical fitness and sports activity tax credit; pension income relief, and so on.

All you have to do is stand up in your place and tell us—the answer is yes or no—do you support these tax relief measures introduced by the government of Canada yesterday? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Yesterday, he was asking me a question that led me to believe he was running against Mayor Miller, and now I get the sense that he longs for life in the federal government by asking about federal policy.

I'll tell you, we have nothing to do with that particular budget, but what we can do is work together to ensure that Ontario gets its fair share when it comes to dealing with the fiscal imbalance. There is something to which Mr. Tory can lend his support. An important question that Ontarians are asking themselves is whether or not we are going to be supported by Mr. Tory and the Conservative Party of Ontario when it comes to ensuring that the people of Ontario in fact have their fair share of the fiscal imbalance allocated to them. That is a very important question. I think that is more relevant to the debate that will be taking place inside this Legislature and indeed throughout our province.

**Mr. Tory:** I can only say to the Premier that not once but twice I have met with Stephen Harper—before you did in both cases—once when he was Leader of the Opposition to support—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Stop the clock. Once again, I ask the government benches to come to order while someone has the floor. The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** I met with him once when he was Leader of the Opposition to support the all-party resolution in this Legislature to support Ontario's case, and once since he was Prime Minister, where I did exactly the same thing.

Yesterday's budget was well received by working families all across Ontario, because finally somebody has recognized their plight of working harder and falling further behind, and somebody's given them some of their hard-earned money back. In light of this good news, the only nightmare scenario would come if the McGuinty government decided to tax any of that money back. We've seen that before.

My question is this—and I recognize that we'll have to take the answer with a large grain of salt, given our prior experience. The question is very simple: Will you stand in your place today and indicate to this House and to the people of Ontario that you will guarantee Ontario families that you will not be raising their taxes?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I say to the member opposite that we long for the day when we will have our books in order in this province. We are working long and hard to achieve that objective and we hope to be there sooner



rather than later. But there's an important lesson to be drawn by all Ontarians, and it's the difference between a government, whether federal or provincial, that assumes its proper responsibility to manage the books carefully, understanding that we don't have any money other than the money that is given to us by Ontario taxpayers.

Again I say to the member opposite, who is apparently determined today to talk about federal tax cuts in an Ontario Legislature, we long for the day—and hopefully it will come sooner rather than later—when we can, together, in this House, provide some relief to the people of Ontario by way of their financial contribution to our government, because we have been working long and hard to restore stability and integrity to the management of Ontario finances.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. We can talk about the careful management that takes in \$6 billion in extra revenue and still ends up with a deficit of \$2.5 billion, but that's for another day.

Yesterday, the federal budget provided for an extra \$2 billion to be spent on agriculture over the next two years. This year alone, they are allocating more than 1.5 billion new dollars towards this critical sector. This has been met with positive feedback. Dave Start from the Oxford corn producers says he's glad that the federal government recognized the importance of agriculture to the Canadian economy. Martin Lang, president of the Glengarry Federation of Agriculture, was encouraged to hear that they put in \$500 million more than expected.

My question to the Premier is this: If the federal government has now announced a significant increase in their budgeted assistance, when can we expect you to come to the table and reverse the disastrous spending cutbacks you have planned for this year that were announced in your budget? When are you going to reverse those?

1440

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Again, I appreciate the question, but in fairness to the member opposite, he must be misinformed, because farmers know and Ontarians know that we continually increase the amount of funding that we make available, either through operating dollars or through extraordinary assistance, to farmers who find themselves struggling.

Now that we've been told there's a certain amount of money that's going to be flowing to Canadian farmers right across the country, the real issue is, are Ontario farmers going to get their fair share? That's the issue. I'm asking, with all sincerity, that Mr. Tory stand in his place and commit to this House, but more importantly to Ontario farmers, that he will stand side by side with our government to ensure that we get our fair share of those dollars for Ontario farmers.

**Mr. Tory:** The only place from which Ontario farmers are not getting their fair share is from the McGuinty

government, which has reduced planned spending on agriculture by \$284 million in this year's budget.

One of your favourites is "compare and contrast." This is one of your favourites. Let's compare and contrast these Liberal representatives talking about the federal budget. We have the Welland Liberal MP, "Maloney had some praise—he said the winery excise tax reduction and more money to assist agriculture were good for Niagara's economy." And then we had—proving there's hope yet—Peterborough Liberal MPP Jeff Leal pointing "to the federal agriculture funding and the tax credit for people who buy transit passes as positive initiatives for the Peterborough area."

Let's compare that with Jim Wheeler, ADM of your Ministry of Agriculture and Food, commenting on the plight of Ontario farmers and saying, "How long should society support the production of a commodity that shows no hope of being profitable?"—Ontario Farmer, March 28, 2006.

Is this the policy of your government? Does this man's comment, Mr. Wheeler's, reflect the policies your government?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I take it from that that Mr. Tory is not prepared to stand with Ontario farmers and, if necessary, take up our cause with the federal government to ensure that Ontario farmers get their fair share.

Again, from one question to the next it's difficult to figure out where this leader and this party are coming from. In the first question, they're telling us that we should be spending less by way of supports, either through health care or education or protections for the environment or support for farmers or support for the forestry sector or support for manufacturing and that we should be putting more money into tax cuts. But in this particular question, he's saying no, we have to spend more money to support Ontario farmers.

Our record is very clear. We have stood beside farmers through thick and thin. We're now, this year, putting \$120 million more for farmers than the Tories invested in their last year in government, by way of contrast. It's hard for us on this side of the House to figure out from one question to the next where this leader and his party stand.

**Mr. Tory:** What is very clear is that I will continue to stand with Ontario farmers. The question is, when are you going to start? That's the real question.

When Ontario Federation of Agriculture President Ron Bonnett had a look at your recent McGuinty budget, he was quoted as saying, "We need proof the government is serious about supporting agriculture in Ontario, and yesterday's budget offered none."

In commenting on yesterday's federal budget, the London Free Press said that Ron Bonnett was encouraged by yesterday's budget. Albert Witteveen, president of the Niagara North Federation of Agriculture, said, "It's good news" and added that it "should create optimism out there in the agriculture community, especially for the grains and oilseeds farmers." The CFIB says that confidence in our agriculture sector is declining and they



expect their businesses are going to be weaker than 12 months ago.

Premier, we need action from your government. My question is this: By what specific date are you and your minister going to come forward with specific measures to help the farmers of Ontario? When are you going to bring forward a plan to help the farmers?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I want to welcome the leader of the official opposition in lending apparently some modest support to Ontario farmers. It's unfortunate that it was induced as a result of a federal budget.

But let's get to the issue of the day, and that is just how much of this new money is going to in fact come to Ontario farmers. I can tell you that that's the question that weighs heavily on the minds of Ontario farmers. I can also say that we have, throughout our mandate, worked closely with Ontario farmers. Each and every year, we have provided extraordinary assistance to farmers. I think we have a total of close to \$800 million by way of extraordinary assistance that we have brought to the table.

What we're saying to the federal government at this time, and I'd ask Mr. Tory to relay this to his colleagues on Parliament Hill, is that we are eager to sit down with them and work out a long-term plan to ensure that farmers no longer have to run to Parliament Hill or Queen's Park on an ongoing basis. The Minister of Agriculture has extended that invitation on an ongoing basis to the federal government—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question?

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Once upon a time, before Stephen Harper became Prime Minister, before even Paul Martin became Prime Minister, Dalton McGuinty promised to invest \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces for Ontario's kids. My question is, when is the McGuinty government actually going to invest \$300 million of Ontario money to create those new child care spaces that children so desperately need?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** When the leader of the NDP begins to wonder why Ontario families are not going to be able to benefit from the commitments we had made jointly with the federal government when it comes to ensuring there was an adequate supply of new, quality, affordable child care spaces in Ontario, he need look no further than in the mirror. His party was more than complicit in ensuring we had an election here in Canada, and they did not take the necessary steps to ensure that that child care agreement was protected. If the leader of the NDP wonders why Ontario families will no longer be able to benefit from that remarkable achievement, that new program of bringing child care to the people of Canada, again I say he need look no further than in the very mirror itself.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, everyone knows that Stephen Harper is not a supporter of child care. But Dalton McGuinty, on the other hand, claims that he is a supporter of child care. It's Dalton McGuinty who promised to spend \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces. I think what's bothering people is that it is the McGuinty government that has gone deadbeat on this promise. In the past year, you had \$3 billion of revenue windfall, but you couldn't find money for child care. Premier, don't blame the federal government. We know where they're headed. What's your reason for your failure to invest Ontario money in new child care spaces?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's not surprising to find that the Conservatives are apologists for the federal Conservative government, but it is passing strange to see that the leader of the NDP is now saying that somehow Prime Minister Harper bears no responsibility when it comes to what's going to happen to the promise of child care in the province of Ontario. Apparently, Prime Minister Harper had nothing to do with the promise of child care in Manitoba or Saskatchewan or British Columbia or Nunavut, for that matter.

We are pleased that we were able to put in place 14,000 new spaces. We've made that perfectly clear to Ontario families. We would like to be able to do more. If the leader of the NDP were to speak to his colleague on Parliament Hill, maybe they could move the federal government in the right direction so that together we could bring to Ontario families what we had arranged with the previous government, what would have been a total of 25,000 new child care spaces for Ontario families.

**Mr. Hampton:** I sense some desperation on the part of the Premier. The Premier, who promised \$300 million for new child care spaces, has failed to deliver and is now looking around, anywhere and everywhere, to find someone to blame. This is not about Saskatchewan, it's not about Nova Scotia, it's not about Manitoba, it's not about Alberta; it's about Dalton McGuinty, who promised \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces, and now, three years into the McGuinty government, when you had a \$3-billion revenue windfall, you failed to keep that promise. Children want to know, parents want to know when Dalton McGuinty is going to keep his promise and stop blaming everybody else in Canada for his failure.

1450

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Ontario families and Ontario parents and Ontario children, were they to voice their concern, would see it differently. I think what they really want to know is whether the leader of the NDP is prepared to join our government in making our case to the federal government to ensure that this new federal government will support the agreement we struck with the old federal government to ensure that Ontario families benefit from 25,000 new child care spaces. That's what we went to the wall for; that's what we earned for Ontario families. Then we had a change in government, and the question we have now is whether Mr. Hampton stands with our government in our case that we're



making before the federal government to ensure that we get those 25,000 spaces.

### ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Premier again: Your speeches blaming the federal government, saying they're not sending you enough money, might have some credibility if you actually spent the money you do receive from the federal government on the purposes it was intended for.

Let's take affordable housing: The federal government sent you \$150 million—federal money—for affordable housing, but your own budget shows that you invested only \$62 million in affordable housing. The question is, where did the rest of that federal money that was intended for affordable housing go? What did you use it for? Don't blame them if you're not going to spend the money they send you for the very purposes it was intended for. So tell us, where did that money go?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** The leader of the NDP is wrong. Every penny we have received from the federal government and that we're putting in ourselves is being spent on affordable housing.

It was about a year ago today that the historic agreement was signed with the federal government so that \$702 million of federal and provincial money could be invested in affordable housing. As a result, that housing has started to be built across this province. We implemented an early build program, a strong start program, that made sure that projects that were ready to go were actually being built. As a matter of fact, we've had some very good meetings with our service managers, who are making sure that that housing is being delivered at the local level, to make sure that housing is being built as quickly as possible. Right now, over 1,600 units have been built and another 1,600 units are under construction. Every penny of federal money and provincial money allocated for housing has been spent.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think housing advocates will really be interested to know that under the McGuinty government we now have phantom housing. But it's not just affordable housing. There are 443,000 children in Ontario—one in six—living in poverty. The federal government responded to that by creating the national child benefit supplement. But the McGuinty government claws back that federal money, \$1,500 a year per child, from the very poorest of Ontario's children. My question to the Premier is, why is the McGuinty government taking \$1,500 a year of federal money from the poorest children in Ontario and then blaming the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I refer that to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-**

**phone affairs):** I want to tell the leader of the third party what we have done with the money we received. All the money we received went towards children. First of all, we have flowed through permanently the July 2004, 2005 and 2006 national child benefit money. So it's done, and the money has been used to offer services to children. It's going towards Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, the Ontario child care supplement for working families, children's mental health programs and children's treatment centres. So I'm asking the leader of the third party which one he wants us to stop financing.

**Mr. Hampton:** It is your government's record. You complain that Ottawa doesn't send you enough money for child care, but you fail to make your own \$300-million investment in child care. You complain that Ottawa doesn't send you enough money for kids, but you take \$1,500 a year of federal money away from the poorest kids in Ontario. You complain about affordable housing, but the money that the federal government sends to Ontario for affordable housing hasn't been invested in affordable housing. People can't find the affordable housing.

My question to the Premier is this: With this kind of record on child care, with your failure in terms of the national child benefit, with your failure in terms of affordable housing, why do you expect anyone to believe you when you complain that it's all the federal government's fault and Dalton McGuinty doesn't have any responsibility for the failures in these areas?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** I wanted to refer it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let's just go over the facts. The actual number of housing units that will be created with the affordable housing money, the agreement that was signed last year, is 9,000 rental units, 4,500 ownership units, 1,500 northern units and 5,000 housing allowance units to help low-income individuals. Housing allowance agreements have been signed with just about every service manager out there, and we expect that the vacant units that exist around this province will be made available at a lower rent for low-income individuals in the very near future.

We're on this on a day-to-day basis, because we know that housing is absolutely essential for our most vulnerable in society. We want to make sure that all of the money that we're investing and that the federal government is investing goes into either home ownership, housing allowances or affordable housing programs. It's being done as we speak.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** A question to the Premier: Yesterday, as you know, we saw a budget coming out of the new Conservative government in Ottawa that cut taxes for working families and seniors in Ontario. It was a budget that kept its promises, unlike



what we've seen here in Ontario in recent times under Dalton McGuinty, full of broken promises and the largest tax hike in the history of the province; a government that tries to Hoover up every last penny out of the pocket-books of hard-working, middle-class families in this province.

Premier, my colleague the Leader of the Opposition asked you a very direct question: Are you going to move into the tax room caused by the tax reductions out of Ottawa? Are we going to see an increase in taxes coming from the McGuinty government to take up that tax room?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I know they're looking forward to the budget of next year, and we look forward to delivering that at the appropriate time, but in the meantime, we will stay focused on our priorities, which we firmly believe are the priorities of Ontarians.

We're improving the quality of their health care. More specifically, we're getting wait times down. I think that's really important to the people of Ontario.

When it comes to education, we're getting class sizes down and student achievement up, and we want to get the Learning to 18 initiative under way. At the post-secondary level, we have a massive investment that will bring about 75,000 new spaces in training, colleges and universities.

When it comes to supporting the economy, we'll continue to work with our farmers, manufacturers, people in the forestry sector, and to build on our successes in the auto sector. We will continue to bring about protections for the environment so that we can guarantee to our children, and grandchildren in particular, that they will enjoy the quality of life that we experience here today. Those are the priorities of the people of Ontario, and we will remain focused on their priorities.

**Mr. Hudak:** I find it disconcerting that the Premier will not say he is not going to jump into the tax room now created by lower taxes coming from Ottawa and hope the Premier will clarify that he has no intention to further raise taxes on working families and seniors in Ontario. Premier, taxes are way up, hydro is way up, gas prices are way up, home heating costs are way up—and new user fees. Thanks to Dalton McGuinty's recent budgets, they can no longer afford tax hikes like they've seen from you in the past.

1500

I know that your finance minister is now, interestingly, in the Republic of Ireland, trying to sell his big spending and big taxing budget. Premier, you know that Ireland reduced their taxes significantly, shrunk the size of government and saw a major expansion of jobs that's the envy of the world.

Are we going to see from your finance minister a conversion on the road to Dublin? Is he going to come back with eyes open to lowering taxes or will we continue to see a gluttonous attack on the pocket—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The question has been asked. Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I don't know if there was a question there or not, Speaker, but I did like the line about "conversion on the road to Dublin."

We will remain focused on the task before us. We want to improve the quality of public education for all Ontario children. The party opposite wants to take money out of public schools and invest those in private schools. We see things differently.

We've invested ever more money in health care. The party opposite would take \$2.5 billion out of health care.

We think it's really important to eliminate coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. The party opposite would put their faith in a technology that has yet to be invented.

I think there are some really good contrasts setting up for the people of Ontario as we move forward. But more than anything else, at this point in our mandate we remain focused on the most important job at hand, which is improving the quality of public services that Ontarians are entitled to rely upon.

## TAXI INDUSTRY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is for the Premier. Taxi drivers are worried after a wave of violence against cabbies. One of the victims, Mahmood Bhatti, a 40-year-old father of four, is dead. He was dead after an assailant attacked him from behind, stabbing him in the neck, killing him.

One way to help prevent violence against taxi drivers is to exempt safety shields from provincial sales tax, to make those safety shields more affordable to those who want them. Premier, will the government consider taking action to make that more affordable?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Let me take the opportunity to express my sympathies, I'm sure on behalf of all members on all sides of this House, to the family and friends of the victim who experienced this terrible tragedy, and of course this falls hard upon the heels of other similar incidents. I think we all feel for the jeopardy, apparently, which some of our taxi drivers are now placing themselves in simply by going to work every day.

I say to the member opposite that it is the first time I've heard of this particular proposal. Let me just say that if there is anything our government might do that would have a real and lasting impact that would promote the safety of our taxi drivers, we are more than prepared to consider that.

**Mr. Tabuns:** As the Premier has indicated, driving cabs is one of the most dangerous jobs. It ranks in the top 10 most dangerous in terms of occupational safety. It ranks in the top five most dangerous in terms of being a victim of crime. Each day on the job, cabbies put themselves in harm's way. The least we can do to act to protect the lives of taxi drivers is to move forward on an exemption from the provincial sales tax. Is your government prepared to act quickly on this measure or others?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I want to commend the member opposite for the spirit with which this advice is



tendered, and to repeat once again that we are more than prepared to consider any proposals that would have a real and lasting impact when it comes to promoting greater safety for our taxi drivers.

I just think as a matter of fundamental principle that people, no matter where they work, should be able to go to work and their families should be able to have a sense that when somebody is going to work, they will return home at night and not expose themselves to undue hardships and undue danger regardless of where that workplace might be.

Again, I thank the member opposite for his suggestion. I say that we will take it under advisement and that we will consider any other thoughtful proposals as well.

### WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP CHAMPIONNAT MONDIAL DE HOCKEY JUNIOR

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. Earlier this afternoon we heard the announcement that the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championship is coming to Ontario—to our hometown of Ottawa, the future home of the Stanley Cup.

Any hockey fan here today will know what a great event this is, attracting the best junior hockey players from around the world. The event also attracts tens of thousands of visitors and international media attention.

Minister, my question is about the impact this event will have on amateur hockey in Ontario. How will the World Junior Hockey Championship benefit the over 404,000 Ontarians involved in amateur hockey?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** I think all members of the House will join me in congratulating the Ottawa bid team for winning this very prestigious tournament.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** It's the first time the New Democrats have ever applauded me, so I thank them for that.

We had tough competition from Toronto, Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary and Montreal. I also want to salute the Toronto bid team, who represented Ontario very well. They did a great job. Darryl Sittler was their honorary chair. But I want to put on the record the bid committee for Ottawa, who put a lot of time, effort and expertise into their bid: Eugene Melnyk, the chair of the Ottawa Senators; Mayor Bob Chiarelli; Cyril Leeder, the COO of the Ottawa Senators; Scotiabank Place; Jeff Hunt of the Ottawa 67s; and Jules Lavictoire, president of the Ottawa District Hockey Association.

The great thing about the World Junior Hockey Championship: Net proceeds go back into amateur hockey and the young—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** Oui, les gens de l'est de l'Ontario se réjouissent aujourd'hui de cette grande nouvelle.

Je félicite l'équipe de la ville d'Ottawa et le président de l'ODHA, Jules Lavictoire, pour leur travail à la préparation de la soumission qui a connu un franc succès.

Et à vous, monsieur le Ministre, merci d'avoir été présent à la présentation de ce projet de grande envergure.

Minister, it's been 20 years since we've seen a World Junior Hockey Championship in Ontario. Obtaining a major sporting event like this is great news for Ontario and for Ottawa, creating a great economic impact for the province, the city and also for the communities in my riding. Can you detail for this House how we, our government, were able to support Ontario's two bid cities and win these games for Ottawa?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. It was a great pleasure for me to join the Toronto and Ottawa bid committees during Easter weekend on behalf of Premier McGuinty to support those two Ontario cities. I also want to thank the Premier for personally involving himself in the bid. That did make a difference, both his contact with Hockey Canada as well as a video that he provided.

The estimated economic impact when the games came to Vancouver last year was \$41 million. I'm pleased today to announce that the McGuinty government is supporting the Ottawa host bid committee by providing \$2 million in provincial funds to support the operating costs of this very worthwhile activity.

The Ottawa District Minor Hockey Association is behind this bid, because they understand that the economic impact is not only good for the local economy but also for hockey in general. We wish the organizers the very best. The province will be there to help them in any way we can to make this the best World Junior Hockey Championship in the history of the tournament.

### TRANSIT TAX CREDIT

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Premier. You'd be well aware of the leadership shown yesterday in the federal budget with respect to a transit tax credit for citizens of all ages who choose to use public transit. For example, it's important for the citizens that in this program a typical TTC rider, who pays \$99.75 a month for a Metropass, would now receive a tax credit of \$185 a year. The credit would cover almost two months of transit travel.

The federal announcement is an excellent opportunity for the provincial government to show similar leadership. I put to you that it's probably time for a vision for you to work in partnership with Prime Minister Harper. Will your government consider a similar incentive that would harmonize the transit program with the federal government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Transportation.



**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** We are very proud of the investments we have already made in transit. In the last budget, we provided another \$1.2 billion extra, for three major transit projects and \$400 million for roads and bridges. We are really wondering, which is not very clear in the budget that was presented yesterday, whether they will ever match the \$670 million we are providing for the Spadina subway, another \$65 million we are providing for the Mississauga Transitway and another \$95 million we will be providing for Brampton Transit. So we look forward to getting some details that these projects will be matched.

1510

**Mr. O'Toole:** I would remind the Premier this is really a fiscal question. The Minister of Transportation is talking about the last budget. It just shows how disconnected he is to the issue of public policy. I mean that respectfully. My question, Premier, to you, is quite direct and quite simple; you can deflect it to him as well. What this is about, Premier, is respecting the users here. We're not talking about Brampton Transit and the 10-year money you announced in the budget for the subway station that'll be built sometime under John Tory's government, that's for sure. What I'm asking you is to look at working in partnership, by harmonizing the transit tax credit, to make transit more affordable for the users. We're always talking about encouraging or incenting people to use public transit. It helps the environment; it helps gridlock. Premier, just stand up today, as you did with the taxi issue and do the right thing: Try and help make public transit affordable. Will you work with the federal government on this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Actually, I'm very surprised at the questioning of this member, because that is the government, the previous government, that actually did nothing for public transit; nothing at all. In 1995-96, there was \$660 million being spent on public transit; in 1999-2000, it came to \$68 million. They thought that was too much. Then they decided to decrease it to \$38 million later on.

What we have done is we have provided clear leadership on transit projects because we thought that was the only way to deal with some of the congestion issues in this province. We are really looking forward to getting some details from the federal government to see if they have in fact matched the leadership we have provided in our last budget. We look forward to those details.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** A question to the Premier: Rhonda Jane Wiley from Welland has been a front-line health care aide in long-term care for over 20 years now. She says, "I am horrified that seniors that fought for us to be free, and (who) built Canada, are treated like yesterday's trash. I don't blame this on the staff; I blame it on the government." Rhonda asked me to "tell Dalton McGuinty to ... check himself in for a month or two, and his bath day will be every Tuesday," but only on Tuesday. Premier, when are you going to keep your

promises to the seniors who worked so hard to build this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I would say to all members of provincial Parliament that we have 1,618 long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario. I've had the privilege of visiting many of them, sometimes announced and sometimes unannounced. My colleague my parliamentary assistant from Nipissing made a very regular occurrence of visiting long-term-care homes on an unannounced basis. What we find there as MPPs is important, I suppose, for the kind of questions we ask. The experiences I enjoy in my riding with quite a number of long-term-care homes is that they provide a very good quality of care.

We've invested 740 million additional dollars since coming to office in the provision of long-term care. By way of supplementary, I will enumerate some additional things we did, but I think it's incumbent upon us, and accordingly we've created an action line that has very prompt response to any complaints, such as those of the nature that might have been advanced by the honourable member. I encourage Ontarians to avail themselves of that if they do feel that the circumstances—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Kormos:** You see, Rhonda Jane Wiley's experience with long-term care doesn't just include her own work in her workplace. She talks about her elderly mom, who was left on the toilet for over 30 minutes, ringing and ringing a bell that no one had the time to answer. She says, "My mother, brother and I decided to bring her home to pass away," to die. "We could not stand any more indignity. Our mother might not have been a lawyer, doctor or the person that discovered a cure for cancer, but she was our mother."

Premier, when are you going to keep your promises to folks like Rhonda and her mother? When are you going to make long-term care liveable for our seniors—our folks and our grandfolks?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Again, I'm dissatisfied in any circumstance where an Ontarian does not believe the level of care being provided in a long-term-care home is appropriate. But the honourable member has just raised a question in a fashion to suggest that every one of the 75,000 long-term-care home beds in operation in Ontario is being operated in an unsatisfactory circumstance. This is a preposterous suggestion. If the honourable member believes that, then I think he's not spending time in long-term-care homes.

I'd be happy any day to walk over to Wellesley and Sherbourne or to nearby long-term-care homes to take a look at the quality of care being provided there. Yes, we've done a lot in this area and we're working very hard to enhance the quality of care, because we recognize that these individuals are our most vulnerable. That's why I



think it's appropriate that we have invested \$740 million and that we have 2,334 additional employees in long-term care as a result of our very, very distinct investments.

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. We all know that firefighters in this province face considerable risk to their health and safety, day in and day out. They willingly and courageously place themselves in harm's way in order to protect others and their property. They routinely work in extremely dangerous conditions, yet never allow the danger to deter them from their responsibilities.

But some of the occupational dangers firefighters face may not be as obvious as others. In fact, firefighters face a particular risk of developing certain occupational diseases such as cancer as a result of exposure to various chemicals, known and unknown. Under the current policy, the WSIB has presumptions that certain cancers are work-related to our firefighters; however, it does not cover all cancers.

Minister, I have received calls from constituents, stakeholders and, in particular, their families for the government to review the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to create presumption in the act for firefighters making cancer claims. Minister, can you please tell me what steps we've taken to respond to such requests, which I've been working on since 1999?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for Brant; I know this is an issue that's close to his heart, and he's been a great advocate for firefighters in this province. As well, we at the Ministry of Labour take these concerns of firefighters very seriously. That's why we continue to work with the fire service health and safety advisory committee.

On the issue of presumptive legislation, we know it has been considered by other Canadian jurisdictions. Because of that, I have directed my parliamentary assistant, the member for Thornhill, Mr. Mario Racco, to undertake a comprehensive review of the treatment of firefighter cancer claims and to compile an inventory of scientific literature.

As part of this review, I have asked my parliamentary assistant to meet with officials from the occupational disease research and policy branch of the WSIB, the chair and members of the research advisory council of the WSIB, employer representatives and representatives of the professional firefighters' association. I know that this review will assist me as Minister of Labour to look at where we go with this complex issue, and I've asked him to report by July 15.

**Mr. Levac:** Minister, that's extremely good news, and I appreciate the efforts you're making to take care of our firefighters. It's good news that we're taking proactive steps to gain an understanding of this complex issue. By meeting with representatives from the WSIB, the professional firefighters' association, employers and all the

stakeholders and by examining other jurisdictions, your parliamentary assistant, Mr. Racco, will be able to gain comprehensive knowledge of this very difficult issue. I look forward to his report, and I hope that it's timely.

I do understand, however, that the WSIB recently announced that nine previously denied colorectal cancer claims from firefighters have been reconsidered and allowed. This is certainly good news for the firefighters, and especially their families, who are deeply concerned about their livelihood.

Could you please tell us what the WSIB is doing to ensure that the firefighters and their families are fairly compensated, before your review is finished, when they experience occupational diseases?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** We recognize that the WSIB is an arm's-length agency and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on any individual claim. But you correctly noted that they have reviewed a number of claims. We thank the WSIB for that; it is good news. I can also tell you that the WSIB does recognize the link between certain cancers and firefighting activities, and compensates firefighters who contract these work-related cancers. Over 80% of firefighter claims for some types of cancers are allowed. This is a much higher allowance rate than for other occupations. As well, I think it's important to recognize that the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB will continue to work with firefighters in Ontario and the fire service health and safety advisory committees.

We recognize that this is an extremely difficult issue. I reiterate that I have asked my parliamentary assistant, Mario Racco, to undertake a comprehensive review of this issue, to undertake a broad-based consultation and to report back to me by July 15, 2006, with recommendations as to how we can move forward.

1520

### LANDFILL

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. There is a proposal for the Carp landfill site in the city of Ottawa to more than double its size. While we're sure proud as heck that we're going to get the World Junior's and probably the Stanley Cup, the residents in the national capital are opposed to this landfill expansion. Through myself and the member for Lanark-Carleton, they have petitioned this Legislature, and by next Thursday some 10,000 signatures will be introduced into the Legislature opposing this landfill expansion.

My question is this: My constituents want to know, will the Minister of the Environment accept these signatures from the residents of Ottawa as 10,000 separate comments opposing the expansion of this landfill in the draft terms of reference for the environmental assessment?

And Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the silence on the other side.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** As always, I want to assure the member opposite



that we consider the comments brought forward by all Ontarians. On January 12, 2006, Waste Management corporation announced it intends to go through an individual environmental assessment. Currently it's undertaking its own public consultation, and as I indicated when I was in Ottawa last week, the opportunity is now presenting itself for the community to come together and indicate their prospectus with respect to this landfill. That's what's taking place. That material comes before the ministry as we examine how to move forward with respect to the Carp landfill. These are important comments that will be coming forward, and I look forward to hearing more and receiving them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary? The member for Lanark-Carleton.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** Madam Minister, the next step of the process is for you to set the terms of reference for the environmental assessment. You have a wide discretion in setting those terms. I believe the terms of reference should be as wide as possible. Will you assure the citizens who are living close to this site that all other alternatives to a landfill site at this particular area will be considered, including an alternate landfill alternative, in their proposal for an environmental assessment?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** I know the member opposite understands that individual environmental assessments are proponent driven. The individual environmental assessment and the terms of reference of the EA are put forward by Waste Management corporation. But it is important that the community understand that if an EA were to proceed, the draft terms of reference the company is consulting on now, Waste Management corporation would evaluate alternatives to its proposed undertaking, alternatives to this site, identify and evaluate the potential impacts on human health and the environment and the surrounding community, and very importantly, demonstrate to me that it undertook public consultation and identified concerns and proposed satisfactory solutions to address those concerns.

I invite the community to participate in an individual EA process, if it goes forward. I invite them to continue to express their views to Waste Management corporation. This is what the EA process is all about. This process is about protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians, and I take that responsibility—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### TIRE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, study after study suggests that burning tires in cement kilns can lead to dramatic increases in emissions of cancer-causing dioxins and metals, yet you are proposing to allow the first operational tire-burning cement kiln in Bath, Ontario. Why are you proposing to let Ontario residents and our environment pay the price for your abandonment of a used tire recycling program?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to set the record straight. The instructions I provided to Waste Diversion Ontario in the preceding weeks were to proceed at first with a household hazardous waste program, an electronics diversion program. I want to ensure that Ontarians who want to divert more waste from landfill have the tools they need to be able to do that. At the WDO AGM, what I said to them was, "Focus your attention in the immediate on those two programs."

In the interim, I am working with my ministry to consider options to mitigate the potential adverse impacts from existing stockpiles and to crack down on those illegal tire dumps. That's what we're doing in the province.

With respect to Lafarge, as I indicated yesterday, the process is under way. An application has been made. The scientific research will be analyzed in that context and a decision will be made by the ministry.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Minister, the facts are clear. In a speech on April 20, the one you're referring to, to Waste Diversion Ontario, you stated that the development of a tire recycling program for Ontario is being set aside. Now communities like Bath, Ontario, face the potential of increased health and environmental risks from tires being burned in cement kilns without even an environmental assessment. Will you protect Ontario residents and our environment from increased emissions of carcinogens and metals and ban the burning of tires?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** As I indicated yesterday, my friend opposite should do more research as he asks questions. Let me refer specifically to the comments I made to WDO at their AGM: "Turning now to the used tire diversion program, I want to thank them for their work. We have carefully reviewed the options ... and I have decided to defer the finalization of a used tire program for the immediate future." The issue of used tires needs to be examined in this province.

With respect to Lafarge, I think it is incumbent upon all of us to take a look at the sound scientific research that has been undertaken. We are not scientists here in this room, but there are many wonderful scientists in this province. I listen to the advice that those scientists give me as we make decisions, and I will be listening to that advice as we move forward with respect to the examination of the issues in Lafarge, as we should in each and every circumstance across the province.

#### YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Our government is committed to tackling both crime and the root causes of crime in order for us to live in safe and vibrant communities. These efforts are essential. Minister, last month you made an exciting announcement that is sure to reduce reoffending rates among youth who have come into conflict with the law. Could you tell us more about this announcement and how it will benefit Chatham-Kent Essex?



**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** I would like to respond to the question from the member from Chatham-Kent. He's referring to an announcement that I made last month about 12 new youth intervention centres. This is in addition to 15 that we opened a little more than a year ago. Of the 12 new centres, Lindsay, London, Cornwall, Belleville and Sault Ste. Marie are in operation now. The member's centre in Chatham is in the development stage. In fact, that particular centre will receive \$450,000 per year to run programs.

These programs are for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been ordered by the courts to participate—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Answer?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** —in these types of interventions as part of their probation. I have met with a number of these young people at different centres and, clearly, this is an effort to address their anger management issues, their life challenges—

1530

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Hoy:** Minister, this initiative appears to be an important step forward in making our communities much safer. At the same time, it provides youth who have come into conflict with the law the tools they need to choose a better path. I know there has been a greater focus on reducing the overuse of custody in favour of community-based programs. These programs will help a young person reintegrate into the community in those cases where the youth does not pose a threat to a community and its safety. Minister, what led to this shift, and in what other ways is our government responding to this change in direction?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** In the year 2003, the federal government introduced the Youth Criminal Justice Act. That new Youth Criminal Justice Act is designed to strike a better balance between the use of custody and the use of other programs which are intended to address dysfunctional behaviour when the incidents are of a minor nature. So this act balances the use of custody for those youth who have committed more serious offences with programs for youth who have committed minor offences. I have to tell you that that's where the majority of youth actually fall.

This type of approach has been found to work and to reduce recidivism. We are in fact spending \$22 million per year on a variety of programs, including those delivered through these intervention centres.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you spoke earlier in your announcement about stability in the school system and about all students deserving the same opportunity. As of tomorrow, this will no longer be true in the Thames Valley board of education, as the educational assistants and instructional assistants who look after the most

vulnerable in the school system are asked to go out on strike in order to achieve a contract.

I have a letter here that was sent to you, Madam Minister. It says, "It is with great concern that I send you this e-mail." In fact, it's sent by Ann Larson, an EA at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School in London. What's most important is that she asks for your assistance to help create that stability you spoke of. It says, "It is the students who are losing out. They have special needs and we need to have the time to address them."

Madam Minister, the main issue seems to be that they need more time to look after these vulnerable students. Will you do what you can to make sure that this work stoppage doesn't happen so these special-needs students are not put at greater risk than they presently are?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I do appreciate this question. I know that in your time, when this member was on the government side, not having peace and stability was the order of the day. That is not the case since 2003 in our Ontario today in our education system.

I happen to know that the individuals involved with the Thames Valley area are in negotiations right now as we speak. I am extremely hopeful that because they are continuing in a dialogue, they will be able to resolve their issues. I am extremely hopeful that these groups coming to the table to negotiate, as is their right, will produce results that will make all of us particularly pleased. We believe that we need to keep the students first—all students. I certainly hope that's the case today.

#### PETITIONS

##### LANDFILL

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** This is about the Carp landfill site.

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area—Eli El-Chantiry" and Peggy Feltmate—"and the MPP Norm Sterling" and Lisa MacLeod "all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned," some 500, "support our local representatives and petition the Minister of the Environment not to approve the expansion of the Carp landfill site and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I have signed that.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron—Bruce):** I'm pleased to present a petition.

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years...."

I affix my signature to this.

### LANDFILL

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean—Carleton):** It's no surprise that I stand here before you with a petition for the Carp landfill site from the residents of Nepean—Carleton.

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area ... and the MPP, Norm Sterling"—and Lisa MacLeod—"all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned, support our local representatives and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the Minister of the Environment does not approve the expansion of the Carp landfill and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I obviously support this and will affix my signature.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I have a petition on the subject of the transformation of the developmental service sector.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to express our gratitude to the government of Ontario for taking the lead in beginning discussions with the federal government on the development of a national income supplement program for people living with developmental disabilities and where we have seen the government work tirelessly for the betterment of the developmental service sector; and

"Whereas we agree that the three remaining institutions should be closed to integrate the clients from those institutions into the community and moving them out through an individualized plan that meets the needs of the clients and offer those with developmental disabilities the best opportunity to live in total community inclusion; and

"Whereas we urge this government to invest in services and local community agencies for people with developmental disabilities so they can increase wage rates and ensure the continuum of service with great personnel that comes with the commitment necessary for a sustainable sector; and

"Whereas we thank the Premier of Ontario for his leadership role in closing the three remaining institutions and showing commitment to this sector that will guarantee that people with disabilities finally have the opportunity for total community inclusion;

"... we urge this government to continue its work in the transformation of developmental services, as this is the first review of this magnitude that this sector has seen in over 20 years."

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo—Wellington):** I am presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey. It comes from Caressant Care in Arthur, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per



resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I support this petition as well.

1540

#### NURSING STAFF

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the citizens of Ontario, ask that you will revoke layoff notices given to six RNs (five full-time, one part-time). The nursing staff currently work at Thamesview Lodge and Victoria Residence in Chatham-Kent, but residents of both homes will move into their new facility 'Riverview Gardens' in early April. Layoffs at that time will result in 233 hours less of nursing care per week at the new facility.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to revoke the layoff notices and consider that:

"As they are going to a new facility, the elderly residents will need time for readjustment; they will need more emotional support and understanding, someone to listen to their concerns;

"Higher-needs patients require more care, and both Thamesview Lodge and Victoria Residence were recognized as having higher needs in 2005 compared to the previous year;

"More nursing staff will be required in order to ensure the residents' care, safety and protection.

"If layoffs occur, more pressure will be put on remaining staff to cope with all of this, resulting in health issues such as burnout, stress on staff and also [on] the residents themselves."

I have signed this petition and I hand it to Billy Barnier, our page here from Chatham-Kent.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents from the riding of Durham.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that

they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I'm pleased to sign this in their support.

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I'm pleased to present this petition on access to cross-border travel on behalf of my colleague from Mississauga West, who is unable to be here. I wish to thank Streetsville Secondary School for gathering the signatures, and especially thank Joyce Hsieh and Jennifer Choi for their help. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the United States government, through the western hemisphere travel initiative, is proposing that US citizens will require a passport or single-purpose travel card to cross the Canada-US border; and

"Whereas a passport or single-purpose travel card would be an added expense, and the inconvenience of having to apply for and carry a new document would be a barrier for many Canadian and US cross-border travellers; and

"Whereas the George Bush government proposal could mean a loss of as many as 3.5 million US visitors to Ontario, and place in peril as many as 7,000 jobs in the Ontario tourism industry by 2008, many of which are valuable entry jobs for youth and new Canadians; and

"Whereas many of the US states bordering Canada have expressed similar concerns regarding the punitive economic impact of this plan, and both states and provinces along the US-Canada border recognize the importance of a safe and efficient movement of people across that border is vital to the economies of both countries;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support the establishment of a bi-national group to establish an alternative to the proposed US border requirements, and inform Prime Minister Harper that his decision not to advocate on behalf of Ontarians is ill-advised, and contrary to the responsibilities of elected representatives in Canada."

I will affix my name to this petition.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** This petition is titled, "We Demand Leadership in Land Dispute." It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the McGuinty government was notified of this land issue over a year ago; and

"Whereas the standoff has been ongoing since February 28, 2006; and

"Whereas there has been no leadership from senior levels of government;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty Liberals start showing some real, consistent and timely leadership in dealing with the current standoff in Caledonia."

I continue to support these petitions and affix my signature.

#### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which I would like to read to you.

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve a universal, high-quality public health care system; and

"Whereas numerous studies have shown that the best health care is that which is delivered close to home; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is working to increase Ontarians' access to family doctors through the introduction of family health teams that allow doctors to serve their communities more effectively; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has fulfilled its promise to create new family health teams to bring more doctors to more Ontario families;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the McGuinty government's efforts to improve access to family doctors through innovative programs like family health teams."

I concur with the petitioners, and I will affix my signature.

#### RECYCLING

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas waste from Ontario public schools that could otherwise be recyclable is contributing to increased landfill sites; and

"Whereas diverting waste is critical to sustaining a healthy environment now and in the future; and

"Whereas there is a need to encourage recycling initiatives in all schools; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by the geography club from Georgetown District High School under Making the Grade will require all Ontario school boards to have two recycling bins in each classroom, one for paper and one for drinking containers. As well, cafeterias must have adequate recycling containers outlining items acceptable to be recycled;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member's bill that will amend the Ontario school boards education act to divert waste from Ontario high school classrooms and cafeterias."

I agree with this petition, and I'll sign my name to it. Thank you, Isaac, for taking this petition.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a further petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-

term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I present this to the Legislative Assembly, and I will sign it.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition similar to quite a number that have been read. This arrived from the People Care nursing home in the great city of Tavistock.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I will affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a petition entitled, "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the average price of gasoline has skyrocketed to over \$1 a litre, the highest price at the pumps in Ontario history;

"Whereas high gas prices are causing great hardship for ordinary motorists, small business owners and industry;

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals promised to take action to keep gas prices low;

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have broken that promise and done nothing to help ordinary families getting hosed at the pumps;

"I petition the Ontario government to immediately pass Bill 74."

I affix my signature to that petition.



**OPPOSITION DAY****ENERGY POLICY**

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I move that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government,

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians' electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals' irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario's economy, chase potential investment from the province and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it.

It's addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

1550

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Tory has moved opposition day motion 1. The speaker is Mr. Tory.

**Mr. Tory:** I want to speak for just a few moments on this, and of course a number of my colleagues will join in as well. I move this motion, and we brought it forward today, because we think it is important that a debate like this take place. There really doesn't seem to be any other time at which the government is willing to have such a discussion, and yet the stakes are so high.

This is not just about politics; in fact, it really shouldn't be about politics at all. This is not just about nuclear or coal or wind; those things are all a part of it. It's not about Dalton McGuinty or John Tory or Donna Cansfield. The Premier and the minister would argue it's all about the past. But I'm prepared to come here, and frankly I think many of us are on all sides, and just say that we should start from a premise that past governments of all stripes did or didn't do whatever they did or didn't do, and that we are where we are, and that the question going forward is, what are we going to do about it? The reason we wanted to have this debate today and that I moved this motion is because I think it is appropriate that we should spend more time in this place discussing the question of what kind of plan will, and should, we have to move us forward on this issue.

I think this brings us to the motion. One of the things you have to accept, if there's any possibility that my friend the minister or the Premier are going to reconsider anything they're doing, is to understand full well what the consequences are of the so-called plan—I can't even really bring myself to call it a plan; it's a series of unconnected measures, decisions, promises, public relations gestures and press conferences—to understand what the consequences of that hodgepodge of things are so far. It is, I would argue—the language is in the resolution itself—misguided. It is something that features yet again, as we've seen in so many other areas, a litany of broken promises, and it's irresponsible.

I think if you want to really examine what's going on in this area and the impact it's having, you have to start from a couple of premises that you accept, which this government has given no indication whatsoever they accept in any area, including today, when we asked I think three or four times, including my colleague from Erie—Lincoln, about taxes. They don't get the fact, plain and simple, that people out there in Ontario, in all the cities I mentioned and in many other cities and towns, are working harder and yet they're falling further behind. They just don't get that fact. Sometimes I think the problem is, well, maybe when it's us in the opposition that are standing up and saying these things, people just dismiss it because we're saying it in opposition: "Oh, well. There they go again."

Let me read from a quote that came from the *Toronto Sun*, where they talk about the fact that "while average workers make do with piddly wage gains of a mere 2%—if they're lucky to get a raise at all—at Queen's Park, the number of civil servants making over \$100,000 a year or more jumped 20% in a year, with most of them working at hydro. In fact, McGuinty's Liberals paid \$340 million more a year in salaries since coming to power.

"Meanwhile, cash-strapped families—carrying record household debt—are paying more in taxes with McGuinty's health levy, while the cost of insurance, home heating, gasoline, property taxes and hydro goes through the roof."

You could find a hundred articles, and if you ever go canvassing door to door, that's the big issue people talk about, besides their cynicism about politicians. I think the two are connected, as my friend the new member from Nepean—Carleton would know, because she has recently done that, and I was out there with her.

You go to a city like London, and you see that the rate of the increases that have taken place—notwithstanding that Mr. McGuinty, of course, promised to cap hydro rates until 2006. He has presided over a 55% increase in hydro rates since he has been the Premier of Ontario, this coming from the same man who solemnly promised, just like he wouldn't raise taxes and all the rest, that he would see that those rates were capped until 2006. It was his promise, not mine, not anybody else's here; he made that promise.

You see in the city of London, for example, quoting from the *London Free Press* on April 29: "London



ratepayers will ... be hit with a 12.9% increase in their hydro bills....

"Meanwhile, the Ontario Ministry of Labour reported that ... 12 public sector labour agreements were settled for" wage increases "of 2.8% ... seven agreements in the private sector averaged 1.7%"—a different debate we should have another day about the public sector wage increases far outstripping what people in the private sector are getting.

The London Free Press, in the editorial, concludes, "It doesn't take a mathematics degree to know people are rapidly falling behind." That's exactly what is going on here because of this policy that is seeing these wages go up.

There are two other realities, I would suggest: first, that he said he would cap the rates and they have gone up 55%, and second, he—meaning Mr. McGuinty—is the one who is shutting down supply that is reliable and affordable at a time when supply is scarce. The same Premier who says that we're going to have brownouts and blackouts and various and sundry other dire consequences which are serious for the economy and for the people of Ontario is the very same one who is shutting down a part of the electricity supply capacity of this province without any idea at all as to where the power's going to come from.

The minister stands up and tells us that this one's under construction and that one's under construction. There are a couple now where, I agree, they've moved a bit of earth around. But at the end of the day, if you said, "Where's the power going to come from?" they are still telling us that inflated megawatt numbers from wind power, for example, are going to be part of their solution to that problem, when everybody, including their own IESO, for example, says that wind power should be factored in at a 10% reliability factor. It was Mr. McGuinty who came to this House and said, "Wind is not reliable and gas is volatile, so we've decided that we're really going to invest in those and put all our might behind that, because that's what the people of Ontario should be doing."

So what are the consequences? Well, the consequences are, I think, threatened job losses, severe consequences for the economy of this province. Again, don't take it from me. Mr. Gerry Macartney, the head of the London Chamber of Commerce, didn't buy into using—he says, "I don't know if I'd use Mr. Tory's word, 'devastating,'" when I had said that the effect would be devastating, on April 16, 2006, in the London Free Press, but he did go on to say that "these hydro increases could have a critical and debilitating effect on the bottom-line profitability and job creation of some businesses." To me, if that happened, that's devastating. It's devastating at a time when we have enough problems in this province, let alone having the energy policy of Mr. McGuinty and his party adding to them.

Worse than that, when I've been out touring some of the small manufacturing plants in Ontario, they talk about a couple of other things, the result and the responsibility of this minister and this government. Number one, they

can't really rely on the electricity system, so when they have these flickers and brownouts and voltage reductions and so on, these people tell me how much money it costs them to have to shut down their production for an afternoon or a day or a few hours and have the workers there being paid while that's going on. Secondly, they talk about the fact that they can't—as businesses have to do, and I understand this—price their products and do business with people properly when they're in a situation where they don't know from one week or one month or one year to the next what's going on with hydro pricing policy in the province of Ontario.

Of course, we all know that as jobs are lost, not only does it have a devastating—to use that word again—impact on families because people are without work, but it has a devastating impact on government revenues. We've estimated, just based on averages, that the 55,000 manufacturing jobs already lost in Ontario, partly because of these energy policies, have cost the government treasury \$200 million a year just because people are not paying tax on incomes that they're not earning.

The Association of Major Power Consumers put out a story, and they talked about the potential impact on our economy of continuation of these energy policies through 2025 and so on as being \$16 billion a year on GDP and electricity rate increases of 25% a year—not just this year but every year going forward. Mr. Adam White, the president, went on to say that the brunt of the losses would be faced—guess where?—in northern Ontario, in the pulp and paper industry, "in towns like Kapuskasing and Dryden and Thunder Bay and Kenora," to quote him in his report. Just what they need up there is more of a contribution to continued job losses.

He goes on to say something that is very true, which is that you are going to have a spinoff effect on southern Ontario at the same time, because we all know, from touring the mines and the pulp mills and whatnot, all of these different economic installations, that you can point to one machine after another that was built and manufactured in southern Ontario.

This government is not keeping the promises that they made, not me. Secondly, they are shutting down supply at a time when they're calling into question whether we will have enough electricity "to keep the lights on," to use the minister's favourite expression, in the province of Ontario. They are not coming forward with any meaningful conservation plan. Let's be real about this. The minister has come forward with a little drib here and a little drab there, a little announcement here and a little announcement there. On Monday it's air conditioners; on Wednesday it's a promise to do something about fridges. This, of course, from the same bunch that took a measure that was in place to help people replace their energy-inefficient appliances and repealed that some time ago. Now they're going to try and present themselves as heroes by bringing a new program in, and at the end of the day there has been no meaningful conservation program at all to really incent people, including the big users of power, to do anything about this.



1600

I want to conclude my remarks by simply saying this: I believe, as the resolution tries to state, that this policy—it isn't even a policy—this hodgepodge, this lack of a policy, this lack of a plan, is going to have a devastating effect on the economy and on a lot of cities and towns and therefore on a lot of families and people across Ontario.

An editorial in the Windsor Star says that “the OPA”—the power authority, in writing their report—“was restricted in studying the use of clean coal technology and politically committed to pursuing alternate sources of energy no matter the cost and no matter the risk. As we've said before, it's like asking the fire department to draft a firefighting strategy that doesn't involve the use of existing hydrants.”

The editorial from April 12 concludes by saying, “McGuinty's energy plan will cost electricity consumers more money, do little for the environment while severely damaging the economy and create a climate of protracted uncertainty that will scare off investors and lead to devastating job losses.” That's the Windsor Star. I think it sums it up.

I think it's a good thing that we're having this debate in the House this afternoon. I would urge all members on all sides, including those who might have the courage of their convictions on the government side of the House, to vote in favour of this resolution and send a message to this Premier and this government: There is no plan. There is no policy. This is not good enough. Stop doing this damage to the province of Ontario and its economy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I am absolutely delighted that the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey has given me this opportunity to put before him what I have put before many members of the House: the vision, the plan, the opportunities and the initiatives of the McGuinty government. Although the member would like to suggest that we should not go to the past, I think there's a very famous quote that says that if you do not learn from history, you are doomed to repeat it.

I am pleased to have this opportunity. I'm not sure if this really is a debate, but I am pleased to be able to speak to the issue.

The fact of the matter is this: There has been no other government in the last 20 years that has done more for Ontarians when it comes to ensuring a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of electricity than this government. That is a fact. Since 2003, when the people gave us the mandate to turn this province around, we have been carrying out our energy plan for Ontario, and we have a lot to do. Just like the \$5-billion debt that the Harris-Eves Tories left behind, a health care system in shambles and a public education system that suffered from cuts and chaos, so too was the state of the energy file by the summer of 2003. On every issue, from supply to conservation to transmission to ridiculous pricing schemes that have left our children and grandchildren in

debt, the energy system we inherited in 2003 was, to say no more, a complete mess.

The opposition asked about our energy plan. I sometimes wonder if they know themselves what a plan might look like. The previous government's energy plan consisted of a chain of events and misfortune that resulted in the following for Ontario families, farmers, small businesses and industry: no new generation capacity added to the grid for eight years; no conservation strategy for eight years; no investment in our transmission infrastructure; and a poorly planned and executed electricity marketplace that, within six months, caused prices to skyrocket and resulted in an additional \$1-billion debt.

In the eight years prior to our administration, our demand in this province grew by 8.5% and our capacity fell by 6%. Put another way, the Tories actually took 1,865 more megawatts off-line than they brought online during the course of their mandate, leaving our government and our future governments to pick up the pieces. A legacy of debt, less generation, no conservation, no energy plan: That is the record of the opposition party.

The member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey even acknowledged that his party completely mismanaged the energy sector. I quote: “I'm prepared to sit here, though, and say to you honestly that some of the decisions that were taken, or either not taken or were taken that were incorrect on energy, were taken by Conservative governments”—March 16, 2006.

I'm not going to argue with that. When it comes to energy policy, unlike the members opposite, we are committed to getting things done. The key principle that is the foundation of the McGuinty government's energy plan is ensuring a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of energy for generations to come.

The McGuinty government's energy plan is composed of four key elements: building new generation capacity to ensure that Ontario families and businesses have the power they need; maximizing our existing transmission and generating assets to ensure that we are getting the most out of our public assets; creating a culture of conservation to ensure that we use electricity wisely and efficiently and to ensure that we provide Ontario families, small businesses and industries the tools to reduce their energy use and their bills; and putting the infrastructure in place to ensure sound planning to address Ontario's long-term energy needs.

As I have said before and will say again, we are committed to keeping the lights on in this province. While other parties have dithered and withered, our record demonstrates leadership and action. We have shown leadership and we have taken decisive action in every area of our energy plans since day one. Let me highlight some examples.

On supply, we have embarked on the largest investment in our energy infrastructure since Sir Adam Beck was running Hydro almost 100 years ago. To date, we have brought online 3,000 megawatts of generation capacity, enough power for 750,000 homes. The McGuinty government has set the wheels in motion to bring online



over 11,000 megawatts of electricity, enough power for over five million homes. There is no other jurisdiction on this continent that will bring more power online in the next five years than Ontario. That's leadership.

Building new is critical, but we know that we can get more out of what we already have. While the Tories botched refurbishment and investment in our generation and transmission assets because they chose to sell them, we're committed to ensuring that our taxpayers' dollars are invested more wisely and responsibly. When the Tories invested in the refurbishment of Pickering A, unit 4, it was more than \$750 million over budget and years behind schedule. When we refurbished Pickering A, unit 1, we did it on time and on budget, and that's just one difference between our record and theirs.

Let me give you another example of how the McGuinty government is maximizing our existing public assets. We are investing more than \$1 billion in one of our signature hydroelectric facilities, the Sir Adam Beck generating stations 1 and 2, through the Niagara tunnel project. Currently, the project is one of the largest tunnel projects in the world and will produce enough electricity to power 160,000 homes.

On conservation, we have passed groundbreaking conservation leadership legislation, the first of its kind in Canada, and we're only the second jurisdiction in North America to do it. We have created a chief energy conservation officer and have issued directives to our conservation bureau that will generate up to 1,300 megawatts of conservation, which will result in an investment of up to \$1.5 billion by 2010. While the third party cancelled every single conservation program we ever had in 1993, we are committed to rebuilding a culture of conservation and catching up with our peers.

We have also brought on new efficiency standards for large residential gas-fired furnaces, street and industrial lighting ballasts and refrigerated display cabinets, along with tougher standards for residential and commercial air conditioners, household clothes washers and household water heaters. Ontario now matches California standards for 95% of the product categories regulated through standards.

On securing energy for our future, this government has put the infrastructure and public agencies in place to ensure sound planning. As a government, we are committed to ensuring Ontario has a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of electricity for generations to come, and the McGuinty government is making it happen. We are making it happen by taking the politics out of pricing.

1610

The Ontario Energy Board has introduced a responsible plan for energy pricing that has reflected the true cost of generating electricity. We have to face the reality that electricity prices are rising across North America, as they are rising around the world, and we cannot continue to leave a legacy of debt for our children and grandchildren, unlike previous governments.

The previous government decided to mitigate the disastrous market opening and placed an artificial 4.3-

cents-per-kilowatt price cap. That price cap wound up costing the people of Ontario \$1 billion. Burying your head in the sand and asking your kids and grandkids to pay for your electricity may be something the Tories are interested in doing, but to me it's not leadership, and it certainly isn't to the McGuinty government. We will not be the Grinch that stole Christmas from future generations, like Mr. Eves and the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. Instead of artificial price caps, our plan is to help Ontario families save money on their electricity bill through aggressive conservation initiatives and targeted relief for our most vulnerable.

Along with passing the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, creating the conservation bureau and issuing directives, we have also done the following. We are installing 800,000 smart meters by 2007, and in all Ontario households and small businesses by 2010. The conservation bureau has launched the Every Kilowatt Counts campaign.

But we know that low-income families spend a greater amount of their income on electricity costs, and that is why the Minister of Finance has announced that we will provide \$100 million in assistance to almost 1.5 million low-income Ontarians to help them pay those bills. We've also doubled the emergency energy fund.

Our energy plan also includes an aggressive plan to replace coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of energy and conservation to help clean up our air, improve the health of Ontarians and contribute to the sustainability of our environment for future generations while ensuring the reliable supply of electricity.

The true cost of coal is in air pollution-related diseases, hospital visits and premature deaths. When the health and environmental costs are included, it is clear that coal-fired generation is not only the dirtiest option, it is the most expensive option.

I heard the leader of the third party indicate that bottom-line profitability was very important to businesses in Ontario, but I'm sure he did not mean that it would be at the cost of human life. This study shows that although the financial cost of coal-fired generation could amount to about \$1 billion a year, when we consider the health and environmental damages, the total cost of coal-fired generation in this province is a staggering \$4.4 billion a year.

That being said, maintaining reliability is the first principle of our plan. The Minister of Energy is working together with Ontario Power Generation and a number of ministries to assess the impact of closures on their workers and their communities. The government understands the implications coal has on our health and on our environment; clearly the member opposite doesn't.

Despite his repeated calls for a non-partisan approach to energy policy, this motion put forth today is laden with politics. The member has not stepped up to the plate and put forth any concrete ideas in this motion. That's the problem sometimes with the party across the way. As was said earlier, they can just say anything they like. They don't really have to put in place a plan. They didn't



have one in government, and they certainly don't have one now. What I want to know is whether or not his plan would keep all the coal-fired plants open, or would they close them, and if so, by what date? Because Mr. Tory certainly would be on record for the elimination of coal as recently as 2005.

The member opposite and his colleagues are also quite fond of throwing the idea of clean coal around, but everyone is aware of the fact that there are no technologies in commercial use today to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to eliminate mercury and other toxic emissions. Often what people forget when they just suggest putting in end-of-pipe scrubbers is that what comes out of those scrubbers is sludge, liquid solid waste, which is a hazardous waste. It's not healthy. It just contributes consistently to the pollution of our planet. That's not an answer. It never has been and it shouldn't be in the future. Maybe one day there will be technologies. There are none now, and we're not into half measures when it comes to the air we breathe.

The incidence of asthma in this province has increased by 600% in the last 10 years. I have a son who has asthma. You know, with asthma you can breathe in, but you cannot breathe out. It's terrifying, and people actually die from it. I think we have a responsibility to clean up our air, and I think you have that same responsibility. That's another plan.

Our plan to bring about new small-scale renewable energy is proving to be a cash crop for our farmers. It's called a standard offer program, and here is what Ron Bonnett, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, had to say about it when it was announced earlier this year: "Standard offer power is good for farmers and the power supply. It will let farmers provide clean power to Ontario, while earning useful new incomes and building independence for farmers and all Ontario."

Over the next 10 years, this program will help add up to 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to Ontario's electricity supply. That's enough for 250,000 homes. It's a program that Dr. David Suzuki has said "will revolutionize the market for clean, renewable energy in North America and lay the groundwork for a healthier, brighter future." This program is in addition to the more than 1,300 megawatts of new renewable power that Ontario has contracted for this past year.

Encouraging communities to develop more renewable electricity will spur the kind of innovation in the electricity sector that will help clean up our air, create jobs and contribute to our long-term prosperity. The investment in this province, with 11,000 megawatts, is \$11.5 billion; \$3 billion alone on renewable.

We have also created a net metering program to allow Ontarians to participate in the market. It's more attractive for small generators such as farmers to produce renewable energy, because they can achieve credit for the excess energy they produce.

Just like our farmers, small businesses across Ontario are important to the economy, and we are also working with them to keep their bills lower through the regulated price plan and through conservation. I was pleased to be

able to work with the Ontario Convenience Stores Association as one of my first responsibilities as parliamentary assistant, finding solutions to help small businesses—6,000 of them right across this province. Small businesses that use less than 250,000 kilowatt hours per year have the option of being covered by the regulated price plan set by the Ontario Energy Board for the next year: the first 750 kilowatt hours at 5.8 cents and the remainder at 6.7.

In addition, I have directed the conservation bureau to develop programs geared toward small commercial customers. The conservation bureau will focus on delivering up to 100 megawatts of energy savings by targeting appliances and energy-efficient lighting. While some may scoff, let me tell you that Rabba stores certainly haven't scoffed. There are seven Rabba stores in Toronto. They changed their lighting from T12 to T8. Their savings per year are \$10,000 per store, or \$70,000. Their payback is three years, and then that money goes to their bottom line.

To address the concerns of the industrial sector, we have extended the revenue limit on OPG's unregulated assets for three years, to the spring of 2009—4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 cents—and the rebates will be disbursed quarterly. For the 13-month period ended April 30, 2006, the total revenue limit rebate is expected to exceed \$800 million. Along with the revenue limit, I have directed the OPA to seek up to 1,000 megawatts of combined heat and power projects across the province through an RFP process, which will largely assist large industry developing self-generation to better control their energy costs.

But it isn't enough to ask just Ontarians to do their part to conserve. The government certainly must lead by example, and that is exactly what we are doing. The government is well on its way to achieving the 10% electricity conservation target at government-owned facilities, in particular through innovations like deep lake water cooling, a project that is helping to conserve 9.8 million kilowatt hours a year, and energy retrofits across the entire government real estate portfolio. Some 387 individual conservation projects have been identified, projected to save 62 million kilowatt hours; 106 of those projects were completed as of March 31, 2005.

This government is committed to conservation because we know it's cheaper to save a kilowatt than to produce it. This is in stark contrast to the party opposite, which really made no attempt at energy conservation because, and I quote a former energy minister, "The private sector asked us to get out of large-scale government conservation programs." They "may have made the odd person feel good, but they had absolutely no effect." That was Mr. Jim Wilson in Report on Business.

**1620**

As I mentioned earlier, we've already brought 3,000 megawatts online and we've set the wheels in motion for 11,000 megawatts within the next five years. As I indicated, this means \$11.9 billion in all projects and the creation of 90,000 person years of employment. The Ontario economy is strong, and our energy plan is



building a stronger province. In March, the Ontario economy created 31,200 net new jobs, the second-best monthly gain in three years. The majority of those jobs were full-time employment, and the unemployment rate fell to 6.1%. There were more jobs created in Ontario in March than in any other Canadian province. Since coming into office, there have been almost 230,000 net new jobs created.

I would like to conclude with this: The government is pursuing a comprehensive approach to energy policy, one that ensures that we acquire electricity in a way that maximizes benefits and efficiencies and reduces cost and waste. Our energy plan is comprehensive and it is delivering results. While there is much to do to continue to address Ontario's immediate energy needs, we are also taking a responsible approach to addressing the long-term challenge.

Our vision for this province is clear: an Ontario with a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of power; an Ontario where our industries are leaders in the global economy; an Ontario that is the centre for investment in the energy sector—\$11.5 billion to date; an Ontario that has clean air that our families, children and grandchildren can enjoy; and an Ontario that continues to be the envy of the world.

Many years ago, having participated in an event, I often like to use an aboriginal prayer that I believe is, to paraphrase: It is the responsibility of all of us to walk carefully on this earth, for we walk on our future. I think it's the responsibility for all of us to walk carefully on this earth, because we not only walk on our future, we walk on our children's future. I do not think that responsibility is limited to this government; I think it's a responsibility for all governments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakubuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):**

It is my pleasure to rise and speak in favour of our leader's opposition day motion today, which I will not repeat, that speaks of the unacceptable consequences of this government's failed energy policy, beginning with a 55% rate increase since taking office and a 16% rate increase in the past year. The government was laying the groundwork for a couple of weeks before that, telling us about the huge increases in energy prices in other jurisdictions, but as usual they either don't square with the people or they don't tell them half the story. They were using the state of Massachusetts as an example and citing their 32% increase in hydro rates. However, what they didn't tell you is that Massachusetts primarily gets its power from natural gas and oil. Natural gas is one of the sources this government sees as the solution to bail them out of their failed energy policy, which began with a promise to shut down 20% of the capacity in this province.

If you go back to the time when Dalton McGuinty was in opposition, I can assure you that in his caucus there was far from unanimity on that promise. In fact I know that the previous member from my riding, Sean Conway, who was the energy critic at the time, did not agree with

that policy. You have heard him repeatedly make it pretty clear on different talk shows across this province that he thinks the government was absolutely wrong to make that kind of irresponsible promise, which our leader talks about in his motion, to shut down 20% of our province's capacity with no realistic, workable plan to make that happen under the timelines that they constricted themselves with for purely political reasons. No government has politicized the energy sector like this government we're seeing today. Time and time again, they cite the concerns and studies by particular groups with regard to health concerns and everything else, but they do not present solid evidence to support their claims. It's hard to make a case against people when they stand up and make all kinds of claims about what they want to do and how much they care about people's health and everything else. The fact is that in this province, our standard of living is going to drop if they have their way with their energy policy. That is a threat to everybody's health in this province; our standard of living is an important component of a healthy Ontario.

Dalton McGuinty has been in the government now for some 913 days in this province. Well before that, he was completely aware of the looming energy shortage coming in this province with regard to the capacity at the time, the expected retirement of certain pieces of that capacity framework, and the ability to bring new generation in on time to replace that, under restrictive timelines as well. He was well aware of that. But irresponsibly, he made a promise that he knew he could not keep. Mark my words, this government will not keep that promise. They cannot keep that promise, because the IESO, which has the responsibility to ensure that there will be power in this province, will not let them keep this promise. Thank goodness they are there to keep the lights going in this province, because we cannot depend on this government to do so. They would rather shut down an economy than face the fact that their energy policy has failed.

Some 145 days ago the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, released a report. We had a commitment from the Minister of Energy on that day, December 9, that they would report back to this House within 60 days to give their decisions, based on the recommendations for the power supply outlook in this province in the Supply Mix Advice Report tabled on December 9. It is now 145 days—not 60 days; 145 days—and we have heard nothing from that minister. We have heard nothing from that minister because these people are so boxed in by this failed energy policy—you know, the Premier was talking about the tax assessment issue and he said, "We're seized on this." You know what? They're "seized" on something else too. It's time that the people of this province gave them a little lubrication on the way out the door. So 145 days and no action, and no answer on the part of the minister.

Do you know what one of their excuses is? "Well, we had to go back to a consultative process because some people raised some issues with regard to the recommendations of the report with respect to new-build



nuclear in this province.” My goodness gracious, 913 days in office and you haven’t had the ability to do some consultations, when you knew about the looming supply issues that existed in this province? They are paralyzed by the failures of their Premier and his irresponsible decisions to make promises he couldn’t keep. It didn’t seem to bother him on some promises, but for some reason, on this one he just will not admit that the only thing left on that policy is to bring the coroner in and pronounce it dead, because they cannot follow through on this.

Our leader talked about Adam White with AMPCO and the effect that this government’s policy is having on jobs and our economy, and therefore our standard of living. Here are some of the things they’ve done because of that failed policy: They’ve put out an RFP to the industry and they got responses to it. They accepted contracts in Mississauga, since cancelled, because they accepted bids that were not realistic. You know what? When you have no intention of following through on your bid, you can make it pretty darn low, or if you’re about to go bankrupt, you can make it pretty darn low. That’s what happened with bids that were accepted by this government under the RFP process. Now they have to go back, wasting more time. We at least have started on a plant with Sithe power up in Brampton.

1630

How much time was wasted because they didn’t seem to understand the realities? They didn’t understand how the sector works. They didn’t understand what good numbers were and what bad numbers were. They just hopped in it because, do you know what? They are so desperate, they are in such a box because of their failures, and the people of this province are paying for it. They’re paying for it with 55% hydro rate increases in this province over the last 913 days.

The minister makes unsubstantiated claims every time she gets up and makes an announcement that is either designed to misinform the public or—

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I could quote the orders of our behaviour but I think the member knows—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I withdraw—when she stands up and makes these claims about the projects that they’ve opened up.

In the last couple of months we’ve had three wind projects. She calls them “209 megawatts” of wind between Melancthon, Kingsbridge and Erie Shores. Mr. Speaker, that’s 20.9 megawatts of power. According to the IESO, you can only claim 10% reliability for those projects. But she gets up here and says, “Well, this is power for X number of homes.” She talks about their plans over the next few years, 11,000 megawatts of power, meaning power for five million homes. If you use those figures, then their decision to shut down 6,500 megawatts of power in this province is shutting off the power to three million homes. What kind of sound logic is that? When they came into office, I guarantee that the first thing the people in the industry and people in the ministry would

have been telling them was, “We’ve got a real problem on our hands with regard to the medium- and long-term ability to supply power in this province.” And your decision is, “Well, do you know what? We’ve got a plan. The first thing we’re going to do is shut down 20% of that.” That’s a good plan, and that has caused a great deal of the issues they’re dealing with now, making bad decisions as a result of putting themselves in a box.

The minister talks about conversation—conservation. Conversation too; they talk a lot. They have a lot of conversations about conservation but they’ve done little. They nixed the plan that was in place; they nixed the program that was in place to ensure that energy-efficient appliances would find their way into Ontario homes, thereby reducing the demand on our strained power supply. They nixed that plan.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** Why?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That’s a good question. I guess it wasn’t a Liberal plan. But almost two years later we have no plan to replace that. While they’ve continued to talk about continuing to look for ways to increase the power supply, as I say, we’ve got a report that has been sitting on the minister’s desk for 145 days that she has an absolute duty to the people in this province to respond to within the time that she promised: 60 days. She has failed on that.

We could go on for some time, but I know I have other members of this caucus who want to speak on this issue.

The port lands was another RFP boondoggle that they actually turned down. Hello, did they just wake up or something? When somebody told them, “Do you know what? Toronto is in a real pickle. We’ve got to have power in Toronto or we’re going to have blackouts and brownouts by 2008,” with no respect to the process whatsoever, again talking about that box they put themselves into, they signed a deal without even looking at other proposals. I’m not here to condemn the project. I am here to condemn a process that a government has no respect for because of their own ridiculous commitments to embark on voyages that will only end with a sunken ship.

I do want to wind up and leave some time to my other caucus colleagues, but I’m very pleased to support the motion by our leader, John Tory. He understands the mess that this government has created. It is time for this Legislature to clearly send that message. I hope that the members on the other side of the House, who know your policies are wrong, will support this motion.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** It’s my intention to share the time allocated to New Democrats with my colleague from Timmins–James Bay, but I cannot resist the opportunity to say a few words about the issue before us today.

Having an electricity strategy in Ontario for a reliable supply of electricity, an affordable supply of electricity and a sustainable supply of electricity has really been the foundation of Ontario’s economy. Ontario’s economy is a manufacturing economy. It is not a Hollywood econ-



omy, as some on the Liberal benches would want us to believe. It is not a financial services economy, as some in the McGuinty government want us to believe. It is a manufacturing economy. If you're going to have a manufacturing economy, it means you have to have a hydro-electricity strategy that provides affordable electricity, a reliable supply of electricity and a sustainable supply of electricity. But sadly, as this resolution indicates, all of that is now going down the drain with the McGuinty government.

I want to reflect on just part of what was promised by Dalton McGuinty and what this government is now failing to deliver. Before the last election, Dalton McGuinty said that the private electricity market was dead and that a McGuinty government stood for public power. Three years into the McGuinty government we begin to see just how false those words, those promises, were, because what we've seen under the McGuinty government is that virtually all new generation is private, profit-driven generation, and that carries with it certain repercussions.

The reality is that no matter where you go in the world—in North America, Europe, Australia—the difference between private, profit-driven electricity schemes and public, not-for-profit electricity systems is that the private, profit-driven schemes cost consumers at least 20% more. And there's good reason for that. Anyone who is going to invest \$1 billion or \$2 billion in a new generating facility—that's an awful lot of money. No one carries that kind of cash around; no one has that kind of cash on hand. You have to borrow that amount of money. For a private company to go out and borrow that kind of money, they're likely going to pay an interest rate of about 8%, whereas if government builds a generating facility, a generating station, government can borrow that money for about 5%. The difference between \$2 billion borrowed at 8% for 25 years, and \$2 billion borrowed at 5% for 25 years, is hundreds of millions of dollars in added interest. That's what happens with private, profit-driven electricity: You have to pay tremendously increased borrowing costs, and that gets added to the hydro bill.

The second thing that happens when a private, profit-driven company has \$2 billion tied up in capital like that is that they want at least a 15%, 16%, perhaps 20% profit. That gets added to the hydro bill. So no matter where you are, as soon as a government starts moving toward private, profit-driven electricity, you're going to drive up electricity rates by at least 20%.

But you know, the McGuinty government has done more and worse than that. If you look at other provinces—Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia—what you find is that there is essentially one entity in the province that is responsible for electricity supply. That entity does the planning; they do the forecasting; they build the generation; they build the transmission; they may in some cases build the distribution, or they may work with municipalities to build the distribution lines. That results in efficiency, efficiency for the consumer. By and large, if you look at Hydro-Québec,

Manitoba Hydro, Saskatchewan Power or BC Hydro, the people who run those systems get paid about maybe \$400,000 or \$500,000 a year—not bad pay, not bad work if you can get it. But what has the McGuinty government done in Ontario? The McGuinty government has actually now created seven bureaucracies to look after the hydroelectricity system, and when they add on the so-called smart meter entity, that will be eight.

**1640**

Get a load of some of these. You have the Ontario Power Authority, which is headed up by Dalton McGuinty's former fundraiser, Jan Carr. Mr. Carr gets paid \$800,000 a year. Then you have Hydro One, which is headed up by Mr. Parkinson. Mr. Parkinson, even though he uses the company helicopter for his own personal use to go back and forth to his cabin, is getting paid \$1.5 million a year. Then you have Ontario Power Generation, and the top-paid person there gets paid over \$800,000 a year.

Then you have the Independent Electricity System Operator, and there are lots of people over there making money in the six figures. Then you have the electricity financing authority, and there are lots of people over there making more than six figures. Then you have the electricity safety authority, and there are lots of people over there making more than six figures. Then you have the Ontario Energy Board, which is more bureaucratic than ever, and there are lots of people over there getting paid more than six figures. Then you have the new smart meter entity.

What do all these eight entities do? They drive up the hydro bill. If you're going to be paying \$1 million here, \$1.5 million here, \$1 million to this friend of Dalton McGuinty, almost \$1 million to Dalton McGuinty's former fundraiser, that drives up the hydro bill a lot. Let me tell people at home: There are now a lot of people who are growing very fat in the hydroelectricity bureaucracy that Dalton McGuinty has created, getting fat salaries, fat bonuses and fat expense accounts, and the good people of Ontario and the workers in the industries and businesses of Ontario are paying for Dalton McGuinty's largesse to his friends.

It is worse than that because these huge increases in hydro rates are killing, not thousands of jobs, not tens of thousands of jobs, but over 100,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in this province. The announcements have come one on top of the other. One of the most recent is the closure of the B. F. Goodrich plant in Kitchener-Waterloo, and they were very clear in their press release: 1,100 jobs gone in Ontario, and one of the major reasons: they cannot afford to pay Ontario's hydroelectricity rates. They are looking to other jurisdictions.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** They didn't say that.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** It didn't say that.

**Mr. Hampton:** Oh, Liberals don't want to hear this.

Similarly, go to Domtar in Cornwall, which laid off over 800 workers. What did they cite when they laid off



800 hard-working people? What did they cite when they said they were moving their production to Quebec? They cannot afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly increased hydroelectricity rates.

Over 500 workers at the Cascades plant in Thunder Bay out the door, and what did Cascades say in their press release when they announced they were shutting down the paper mill, when they announced they were laying off 500 workers, when they announced they were moving the production to Quebec? They said they cannot afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly increased hydroelectricity rates.

And so it went for the Abitibi mill in Kenora, the Weyerhaeuser mill in Dryden, the Bowater pulp operation in Thunder Bay and the mill in Red Rock and the mill in Terrace Bay, and layoffs in Fort Francis, Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa. The Domtar example in Ottawa is educational for people because that Domtar mill had two paper machines on the Ottawa side of the river and one paper machine on the Quebec side of the river. What did Domtar announce? They're shutting down the two paper machines on the Ontario side and they're going to continue to run the paper machine on the Quebec side. In fact, they're going to make investments in the paper machine on the Quebec side.

**Interjection:** Why?

**Mr. Hampton:** Why? Because Domtar can't afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly elevated, absurdly increased electricity rates.

I see that the member of the Liberal cabinet, the McGuinty cabinet, from Sarnia is here. She should know that very soon there are going to be some facilities in the Sarnia area that will be announcing layoffs, because the chemical industry has indicated very clearly that they cannot pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly elevated electricity rates.

Just this week we had the mining industry here, and what do you think was at the top of the list of concerns of the mining industry? They were very clear. The mining industry, responsible for about 200,000 well-paying jobs in this province, said very clearly that at the top of their list of worries and concerns is the McGuinty government policy of driving electricity rates through the roof.

This hasn't been thousands of jobs destroyed, it hasn't been 10,000 jobs destroyed; it's been hundreds of thousands of jobs destroyed, and more are going to join the list every week as a result of a McGuinty government that has—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hampton:** No, they have a hydroelectricity policy. They just don't want the public to know what the real hydroelectricity policy is. The real hydroelectricity policy of this government is to go nuclear, go big and go expensive. That's going to add much more to the hydro bill. Because you know what? Not one nuclear power plant in this province, whether newly built or refurbished, has come in on budget or under budget. All of them have resulted in expenditures grossly over budget. One example is Darlington. Darlington was supposed to cost

about \$4 billion to construct. When it was finished, under the Peterson government, it cost over \$14 billion. Now the McGuinty government says they're going to go back into nuclear. They say \$40 billion for new nuclear. If history in Ontario is any record, it won't be \$40 billion, it won't be \$60 billion; it will be \$80 billion plus. That is the record of the nuclear power industry in this province. Do you know what that will do to hydro bills? Do you know what that will do to jobs in this province? It will chase more jobs out of this province than we've ever seen before. That's what we're facing.

There are some absurd results coming from this policy. My part of the province, northwestern Ontario, is not even part of the southern Ontario grid. It's on a separate electricity grid. That's why, when the lights went out in the blackout of the summer of 2003, when the lights went out everywhere else south and east of Wawa, the lights in northwestern Ontario stayed on, because it's a separate electricity system. That part of Ontario has an abundant supply of electricity. Virtually every town is surrounded by four or five power dams, where electricity is generated at a cost of about two cents a kilowatt hour. But do you know what the paper mills and pulp mills in northwestern Ontario that are located right next door to those power dams are being forced to pay for that electricity under the McGuinty government's policy?

1650

**Interjection:** How much?

**Mr. Hampton:** Close to eight cents a kilowatt hour. Imagine that. There you are.

Historically, a mill was located on the Winnipeg River or the Rainy River or the Wabigoon River or near the Nipigon River because of abundant supplies of inexpensive hydroelectricity, and that supply is still there. In fact, that supply can't be taken to southern Ontario—there is no transmission line. It can't be taken to Manitoba—there is no transmission line. It can't be taken to Minnesota—there is no transmission line. It's an energy island by itself. It's an energy island that has the most affordable electricity in North America, and paper mills and pulp mills should be doing a great business there. But as a result of McGuinty government policy, those mills are being forced to pay close to eight cents a kilowatt hour for electricity that only costs two cents a kilowatt hour to produce.

What has the result been? The destruction of thousands of jobs and the destruction of the economies of several communities—no rational reason for it, no excuse for it. Why is it happening? Because of the McGuinty government's absurd electricity policy that we are seeing now.

The other element of this is, if you look around at some of the most successful jurisdictions now, they've made significant investments in electricity efficiency. For example, California has in effect been able to avoid a 12,000-megawatt increase in their electricity consumption through energy efficiency measures. Do you know what 12,000 megawatts amounts to? It amounts to three



Darlington-size nuclear plants. Imagine that: \$14 billion plus \$14 billion plus \$14 billion avoided. That was the cost of Darlington. That's what they've avoided through a thoughtful, focused strategy on electricity efficiency.

Do you have to reinvent the wheel to do that? No. The first thing they did in California was implement a very up-to-date building code so that in California you cannot construct a building of any kind unless it meets their electricity efficiency standards. Just by doing that, California in the last 15 years has avoided a 6,000-megawatt increase in their electricity consumption.

What was the second thing California did? They passed legislation requiring all electrical appliances to be energy efficient. So in California, you can't purchase and install a fridge that's an electricity hog. You can't purchase and install an air conditioner that's an electricity hog. You can't go out and purchase a stove or any other electrical appliance that is an electricity hog. What does that mean? Well, the difference between an ordinary fridge that is not efficient in the use of electricity and a fridge that is efficient in the use of electricity is that the fridge that's efficient uses one quarter the amount of electricity of the one that isn't built with efficiency in mind.

Has the McGuinty government done any of these things? For all of their platitudes, for all of their holier-than-thou speeches, for all of their sanctimonious talk, have they done any of these things? No. No new building code, no legislation, no regulations requiring the most up-to-date energy efficiency appliances.

You don't even have to look to California. You only have to look to our sister provinces, Manitoba and Quebec, both of which have implemented very aggressive electricity efficiency policies. If you live in Manitoba now, a homeowner in Manitoba who said, "You know what? My hydro bill is getting too high. This is ridiculous," could apply for and receive a \$5,000 low-interest loan. They could use that loan to put in high efficiency heating, to re-insulate their home, to put in energy-efficient windows, to purchase energy-efficient appliances and reduce not only their electricity bill but their natural gas bill. And they would pay that loan back with what they save on a monthly basis on their hydro bill and their natural gas bill.

A similar situation in Quebec: Quebec has almost the same strategy. In fact, Quebec is going even further. This past summer, Quebec started looking at older apartment buildings that were constructed in the city of Montreal and started retrofitting those buildings virtually from top to bottom to get electricity usage down.

Is anything like that happening in Ontario under the McGuinty government? Not at all. You get these superficial advertising campaigns that offer nothing for people other than, "Feel good." You perhaps get the Minister of Energy wandering around with a light bulb from time to time, but there is no energy efficiency strategy under the McGuinty government.

Maybe people are wondering, "Well, why is that?" I want people at home to know why that is. It's because

while the former Conservative government just came right out and said they were in favour of privatization and deregulation and then started doing it through the front door, the McGuinty government wants to pretend that it's not in favour of privatization and deregulation, but that's exactly what they're doing through the back door. In fact, there has been far more privatization and deregulation of the hydroelectricity system under the sanctimonious McGuinty government than there ever was under those bad guys Mike Harris and Ernie Eves—far more privatization.

But that privatization agenda carries with it a very big cost, because private companies who want to now control the electricity system aren't interested in an energy efficiency strategy which reduces electricity consumption. Ford is not interested in a strategy which results in people buying fewer cars. General Motors isn't interested in a strategy which results in people buying fewer cars. Exxon isn't interested in a strategy which results in people buying less gas. They want consumption to increase so they can make more profit.

And so it is with the private investors now favoured by the McGuinty government in Ontario. They are absolutely opposed to an energy efficiency strategy. They're opposed to an energy efficiency strategy which would see us use electricity and other forms of energy in a more efficient way and, over time, result in us consuming less electricity and less energy. They're opposed to it because if the market isn't growing, that means their profits aren't growing. That's the real source of the McGuinty government electricity policy. That's the real source here.

I say to folks at home that I may have some differences with the Conservative Party in terms of the motion they've brought today, but I commend the Conservative Party and the Conservative leader, Mr. Tory, for bringing this motion forward, because I have to say that this issue goes to the heart of the Ontario economy. Right now, the absurd McGuinty policy of driving electricity rates through the roof is wiping out good manufacturing job after good manufacturing job virtually everywhere across this province, and the situation's going to get worse and worse. People across Ontario need to know why it is happening and need to hold this government accountable.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I'm happy to speak to this resolution today. The leader of the official opposition would have us completely forget the past. He would like us to completely forget what happened under his party's government and what happened during the blackout.

The leader of the third party referred to the blackout of a few summers ago and the fact that his area wasn't directly affected because they were on a different grid. My area was affected, and the people from Nipissing remember the blackout. They remember the legacy of the Harris government, what the Conservatives did and the chaos that was the hydro plan, or whatever you would call it, because I don't think we could call it a plan during those years. What we were left with was an impossible legacy, and what we're doing is dealing with that.



1700

Part of this resolution today says that no one source of generation should be shut down. With that, I disagree. I believe we should be shutting down coal. Coal is dirty and it kills. It produces carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming. It produces sulphur dioxide, which contributes to acid rain. It produces nitrous oxide, which contributes to smog. Scrubbers reduce some of the effects of SO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>, but they do nothing about carbon dioxide. Scrubbers don't do anything about the carcinogens like arsenic, beryllium, chromium and cadmium. They cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and they don't address those particular issues. Scrubbers don't do anything about mercury, a neurotoxin that leads to reproductive disabilities and learning disabilities.

The cost-benefit analysis shows that coal costs \$4.4 billion per year when you include the health and environmental costs. Those are costs that the leader of the official opposition doesn't want to talk about, but let's just look at the health costs for a minute. Those health costs include 668 premature deaths, 928 hospital admissions, 1,100 emergency room visits and 333,000 minor illnesses. That's the technology that John Tory and the Conservatives support. They don't want to address this issue.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said that there was no one to substantiate these allegations or these positions that we're taking. Well, I disagree. You might be familiar with Dr. Greg Flynn, the president of the Ontario Medical Association. He said, "This year nearly 6,000 people will die—our friends, our family, our neighbours—and they will die as a result of not only the acute effects of smog, but the cumulative effects of smog. We also know that the cost of smog in our health care, and our economy, is at least \$1 billion.... The government and the public cannot afford to not take action on air pollution."

Dr. Flynn also stated, "Closing Ontario's coal-fired plants is the right thing to do. It will improve our health, it will improve our economic well-being. It will make us healthier both in the short run and the long run. It takes courage to establish priorities like this—to establish firm and solid plans to replace the power that we need. It will take considerable commitment to bring these plans to fruition. But I applaud the government for its courage ... for its commitment to make sure that its promises are carried out in a reasonable period of time and in a reasonable way." That is Dr. Greg Flynn, the Ontario Medical Association president, supporting our decision to shut down coal.

Many of my colleagues will talk about some of the other aspects of our plan, but I would like to focus in on one particular aspect that I know is of great interest to my constituents, and that's our conservation plan. Recently, just this past weekend, I attended the North Bay home builders' association trade show at Memorial Gardens, as did thousands of residents of North Bay and area. I was fascinated and really encouraged to see how many displays there were about conservation. North Bay Hydro

was there promoting its conservation plan. Greening Nipissing was there.

The leader of the third party talked about the plans they have for conservation in Quebec and Manitoba. Well, we have some of those plans here. I've had Greening Nipissing, which is a local grassroots organization, come to my home and do an assessment of my home to determine how I can save more energy, how my home can be more efficient and more energy-conscious. They did that assessment. They gave me the recommendations. Through a federal government program that I hope still exists—although I look to the leader of the official opposition to lobby his brethren in Ottawa to continue these programs to ensure that our environment is protected; I hope this program will continue—they will see refunds to some of our residents for the investments they make in their homes.

There were other service providers at Memorial Gardens that day talking about different ways to insulate your home, different little tools, little tricks you can do to conserve.

We as a government have introduced a conservation bureau. We created the bureau that has launched the Every Kilowatt Counts campaign, a direct-mail campaign that will inform residents of Ontario and assist them, through incentive coupons, to purchase more energy-efficient light bulbs, programmable thermostats, ceiling fans. We're seeing rebates for replacing inefficient central air conditioning units and also the installation of programmable thermostats. We're seeing the investment, through the conservation bureau, of \$9.25 million to upgrade lighting and appliances in our social housing to support energy conservation. Across the province over the next three years we will see smart meters being introduced into our homes and into our rental properties.

These are great steps forward in conservation. We have to conserve. It is a source of energy that Ontarians need, and we recognize that and we're moving forward with that. We're not putting our heads in the sand, as the previous government did, and allowing the lights to go out across the province and allowing us to be without power for hours and, in some locations, days. We are moving forward with a plan that will see the lights stay on across the province.

I'm glad the leader of the official opposition highlighted North Bay in his resolution, because I always appreciate the opportunity to talk about all the good-news things that are happening in North Bay: the investment we're making in our bridges and roads and in the completion of four-laning our highway; our new hospital that's being built, which is terribly exciting for our community—we're all very excited about the upcoming groundbreaking this fall. We have much good news to celebrate in North Bay.

While we do recognize that there are struggles ahead in the energy sector, we also recognize, as responsible Ontarians, that we don't want to saddle our children and grandchildren with a debt. We can't leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren to pay the debt for the



power we're using today. We need to conserve, we need to look at alternate sources and we need to reduce.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I'm pleased to have this chance to speak in support of the opposition day motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This motion calls upon the government:

"To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians' electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

"To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals' irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

"To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

"To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario's economy, chase potential investment from the province and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

"To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it."

This motion is as timely as it is absolutely necessary. While the motion is critical of the government's electricity policy to date, it offers a constructive recommendation. This is the role of the opposition.

The subject of this motion is very well chosen, because it affects the vast majority of households, farm families and people in business—businesses that are large and small, including businesses that sustain jobs in the manufacturing sector and in Ontario's tourism industry. It is well chosen because it affects us all and the entire economy of the province. If electricity issues are managed well, the province is more likely to prosper. If electricity issues are mismanaged, the province is more likely to stagnate.

I have enjoyed the privilege of serving my constituents in this House over the years. In that time, we've seen hydro issues move to the forefront and become more and more contentious and politically charged. The irony is that since 1990, all three of the major political parties in Ontario have held office, and none of us would be so bold as to boast that our energy policies met the test of perfection. The controversy over privatization versus public ownership; Sir Adam Beck's principle of power at cost, which eventually evolved into a situation where we weren't paying the full cost, leading to a massive debt in the billions of dollars carried by the old Ontario Hydro; hydro rates which were kept artificially low because historically one of the competitive advantages our industries enjoyed had been low-cost power; the need for effective conservation so that our precious energy re-

sources are not squandered and wasted; in some cases, legitimate environmental concerns about air pollution from old coal-fired generating stations; proper management of hydro infrastructure; and of course the need for security and certainty of supply, which ensures that the lights actually do stay on: These are some of the key issues.

Irrespective of which party is in power, my view is that hydro today is perceived less as a source of strength, affordability and certainty than it once was in Ontario. Regrettably, hydro has become yet another political football. From time to time through the years that I have been privileged to serve here, business leaders, farm families, municipal officials and families paying their bills have called on me to voice their concerns about hydro, and I have done so. This Liberal government, which literally holds nothing dearer than hanging on to power at all cost, may need to be reminded that their mismanagement of hydro will eventually be a major part of their undoing. Our energy critic, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, is doing a top-notch job of raising key energy issues in this House. I want to compliment him for the tenacity and effectiveness he brings to the job of holding the government to account. His predecessor as our energy critic, the member for Durham, has a wealth of knowledge on electricity issues that continues to inform this debate. I look forward to his comments this afternoon as well.

**1710**

It is fair to point out, though, that the McGuinty Liberals, in the election of 2003, amongst their long list of promises, assured Ontarians that they would freeze electricity rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour until 2006. They broke that promise. Now it seems that rates will continue to go up for the foreseeable future. While I realize that we have to pay the full cost of generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, since 2003 the McGuinty Liberal government has completely mismanaged Ontario's electricity system.

One of the most distinct examples of this is their stubborn refusal to be up front about our coal-fired electricity generators. There isn't a member of this House who doesn't care about air pollution and greenhouse gases. All of us support stronger measures to ensure that the air we breathe is cleaner and that we reduce harmful carbon emissions. However, responsible management and, dare I say, common sense would dictate that you don't shut down one fifth of your generating capacity unless you have replacement generating capacity ready to be turned on. Yet this is the Liberal electricity policy, causing uncertainty, leading to reduced investment and ultimately fewer new jobs.

What is needed most of all and what this resolution calls for is that we must take the partisan bickering off the table. To me this resolution suggests, "Let's get to work for good public policy, respect the work and expertise of our professionals in the hydro sector, set aside our ideological baggage, stop fearmongering, be practical and take action to ensure that Ontario has reliable and affordable electricity for generations to come."



**Mrs. Sandals:** I'm pleased to be able to comment on the opposition motion here today. Before I address the opposition motion, I couldn't help but want to comment, after the leader from the third party spoke, to remind him that when we refurbished Pickering A, unit 1, unlike the previous government, we did it on time and on budget. So it is possible to do these refurbishments within cost.

However, let's deal with the motion that's on the floor. I would like first of all to correct the record, because I think some of the premises in the motion are just plain wrong. The motion identifies my constituency of Guelph as having been one of the municipalities hardest hit in the province by skyrocketing rates. The concept of "hardest hit" is an interesting one, because every residential consumer in Ontario will pay exactly the same cost for electricity. It is being increased by 0.942 cents per kilowatt hour. If you use 1,000 kilowatt hours per month, that translates into an extra \$9.42 per month. It doesn't matter where you live in Ontario; that's the increase.

The variability in increase, and it is significant, comes as you move from municipality to municipality, and it's due to the charges increased, or decreased in some cases, by the local distribution companies. It happens that in Guelph the increase by the local distribution company is actually just 73 cents for 1,000 kilowatt hours, meaning that if you were to use 1,000 kilowatt hours in Guelph per month, your bill would go up to \$10.15. But if you go and talk to the local distribution company, Guelph Hydro, they will tell you that Guelph consumers actually don't use that much per month. On average, a residential consumer in Guelph uses about 600 to 700 kilowatt hours. The average household bill in Guelph will increase just \$6.72 per month, or about \$80 a year.

When you talk to consumers in Guelph, they quite understand that we can't go on in this endless cycle of having electricity costs that are below the true cost of production, and some debt that's building up and up somewhere that somebody—our children—is eventually going to have to pay off.

Consumers in Guelph understand that \$80 a year is not an unreasonable cost to pay for the true cost of electricity, to make sure that we're not injuring our children. That is in fact the average increase in Guelph: \$80 a year. Not a bad deal.

The local paper, in an editorial, pointed out that there's no question that this move is necessary, that the continuing subsidization of hydro rates has left consumers with an unrealistic view of how much the power they use costs. That incorrect view of the price has led to abuse and does not endorse conservation, conservation that is very necessary, and my colleague from Nipissing has already spoken about that.

The Leader of the Opposition thinks that perhaps we should forget the past record. Well, I think the past record is very informative, because the Conservative government decided that when it came to generation, they would just wait for the private sector to build it. As a result of that, the generating capacity in this province

actually fell on their watch and the distribution system in this province became neglected.

I totally understand that they did not cause the black-out, but in Guelph we were out for four days. It took four days to come back up, in part because we didn't have the generating capacity in this province anymore to solve our own consumption problems. We didn't have distribution in this province that was reliable enough to bring things back up quickly. In fact, neglect of the system, waiting for somebody else to plan it, did have an impact on my constituents in Guelph.

One of the things that is very important is that we increase our capacity to generate electricity in this province, and we have been very attentive to that. In particular, we have been very attentive to the issue of renewable generation. We have contracted for 1,300 megawatts of renewable transmission.

I'm very pleased that the first of those projects to come online actually came online in Guelph. It's not a large project—it produces 2.5 megawatts of electricity—but I think it's a very exciting project. When you have a landfill—and we have a landfill in Guelph, the Eastview landfill, which has been closed—the organic materials sitting in that landfill generate gases such as methane. What is happening at the closed landfill in Guelph is that there have been pipes inserted to collect that methane as it off-gases, there have been generators installed that are fuelled by that methane, and we are now generating electricity from the closed landfill site—a very ecologically friendly, sustainable project.

If I go to my neighbours to the northeast, in fact to the Leader of the Opposition's own riding, the very first major wind farm in Ontario is in his riding, in Melancthon. The Melancthon project is generating 67.5 megawatts of electricity. That wind farm came into production this year, 2006, and is one of three wind farms currently up and running under our government.

Another exciting thing we have just done is brought in a standard-offer contract for solar energy and other renewables. I have to tell you that when my colleague from Kitchener Centre arranged for to us meet with the solar energy in Waterloo, they were very excited about this project. There are a lot of things we are doing to make sure that our province has a sustainable energy future.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

1720

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** I wish to comment on some of the reasons behind Premier McGuinty's 55% increase in the price of electricity. I'd like to quote—I'm sure a number of members here will remember hearing this: "When it comes to natural gas, prices there tend to be volatile, and it remains a significant contributor to global warming. Wind turbines: We are investing heavily in those, but again, those are an expensive form of electricity and they're not reliable, because sometimes obviously the wind does not blow. When it comes to solar, those tend to be expensive as well." Who said that? For those who may not know,



that's a direct quotation from Premier McGuinty, the man without a plan, but a bit more on this quote later.

Now that warm weather has returned, it won't be long before people's thoughts turn to their air conditioners. Air conditioner demand during last summer's heat wave obviously blindsided this government, something I certainly heard from constituents. I was door-knocking with some of my staff in Haldimand county during that heat wave. At the door, the topic obviously was the heat and, in many cases, the cost of air conditioning. People indicated that both husband and wife were working, they work hard, they didn't feel they live in a Third World country, they didn't want to cut back—this is what I was being told—and they expect the electricity to be there for them to purchase. At that time, the Premier was touting wind turbines as a replacement for coal plants.

What was evident during those hot days last summer down in Haldimand county was the smog. You could see it coming across Lake Erie from the Ohio Valley. As we know, Premier McGuinty was importing power from coal plants in the Ohio Valley at the same time he was talking about closing our own plants in Ontario. Thankfully, he has broken that promise for the time being.

I just want to go back to the Premier's quote on April 13. I get a bit of a laugh when I compare the promises and actions of this particular Premier: "When it comes to natural gas, prices there tend to be volatile, and it remains a significant contributor to global warming. Wind turbines: We are investing heavily in those, but again, those are an expensive form of electricity and they're not reliable, because sometimes obviously the wind does not blow. When it comes to solar, those tend to be expensive as well."

Premier McGuinty says natural gas is expensive and it contributes to global warming, wind turbines are expensive and don't work, and solar is too expensive. The solution? There are some options: Build a gas-fired plant in Toronto; tout wind turbines as a replacement for the cost-efficient coal-fired system we have in the province. I see some inconsistent messaging here. I see a Premier who obviously badmouths wind and pursues wind power; who badmouths natural gas and pursues natural gas; who continues to pursue coal power but badmouths coal as well. And we see that obviously moving forward in spite of that 2007 closure promise.

What continues to astonish me is why the Premier is so ideological in his attempt to destroy our electricity environment, our energy-based economy and, by extension, much of our way of life, all at the same time. Despite the record number of smog days last summer, the Premier continues to refuse to invest in clean air technology for the coal-fired plants. Natural Resources Canada says, "Coal-fired electricity generating plants can be retrofitted or built so that they produce low to zero emissions."

At the Lambton generating station, emissions reduction technology now in place is reducing mercury by 95%. The former government was truly visionary in protecting the integrity of the environment with that \$250-

million investment in SCR—selective catalytic reduction—technology implemented at both OPG Sarnia and Nanticoke.

To sum up, where is the plan? I see a plan. It consists of basically crossing one's fingers. That's not good enough. You can't label gas as expensive and dirty and build a gas plant. You can't say that wind turbines don't work and then build them. People in Ontario are increasingly shocked that the technology exists to clean up our air and there's a refusal to invest.

I now wish to wrap up; my colleague to the left may take over. Again, clean air is too important; supply is too important. We need a plan, we need leadership and we need someone with the ability to match their words to their actions.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I'm really pleased to join in this debate, because I think it's one of those crucial debates we have in this House from time to time. Hopefully, we will walk away from this having tried to change the ways, the current policies, of this government, the McGuinty government, when it comes to electricity policy.

To put the first thing on the record, I've heard some of the members talk about how terrible it is that we ran an electricity system here in the past and weren't really dealing with it at cost, that it cost us a lot of money and that is why we have to increase the cost, in order to pay for the debts of the past etc. Let's remember what hydro policy in this province was all about: It was one of the key factors that drove the economy of Ontario. We decided 100 years ago this year that we would create a public utility. We've gone down this road before. When hydro was first being developed, there were all kinds of privateers out there trying to develop electricity projects and charge what the market would bear in various parts of this province. The government of the day, through a commission, understood that if it didn't do something, some parts of the province might have a cheaper electricity price than others and would be advantaged in attracting industrial and other processes that used a lot of electricity.

So the government back then said, "We need to have a public utility that provides electricity at cost, because if we can do that, it will become one of the cornerstones of the Ontario economy." Over a 100-year period, or about a 90-year period now, the economy of Ontario has benefited from that policy. If you look at the development of the mining and forest industries in northern Ontario, a large part of it was because of electricity costs. It is a type of industry that uses electricity to a large extent. My good friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines will know that in his own backyard, in Sudbury or Timmins, Falconbridge and Inco are the largest utility customers in the province of Ontario. For companies like Avenor, Abitibi, Spruce Falls, now the Tembec mill in Kapuskasing, and others, 25% to 30% of their costs are electricity costs. So we decided by way of policy that we would not allow privateers in the system of electricity, that we would deliver electricity at cost because it is one of the key elements that drive the Ontario economy.



These people didn't come and invest in Ontario on a whim. They came to invest in Ontario because we had something to offer. One of the things we offered for years was cheap electricity at cost. We said, "We believe that we should provide this electricity at cost to industry and to the residents as a way of developing the economy of Ontario." If you look along what is now Highway 401, much of the development along that area has been done because of electricity policy. There are all kinds of industrial manufacturing plants that have established themselves there over the years, and one of the reasons was electricity costs. If all of a sudden you turn that policy on its head and say, "We are changing from being a low-cost area of electricity and we're now going to go to a market system that charges market prices," you've changed one of the cornerstones of your economy and you're going to drive the economy down.

Some people say, "Don't worry. We can convert our economy to another type of economy." Listen, Ontario in large part is based on manufacturing and the production of commodities: fibre from trees of all types, iron ore, gold, copper, zinc. The manufacturing processes in southern Ontario, by and large, are what have driven the economy of Ontario. If we are the richest province in Canada, it's because those industries have established themselves here and done business here. All of us in this House—most of us, I would say—have fathers or grandfathers who worked in those industries and did quite well. Some of us did as well. I worked in the mining industry. Those jobs weren't there by a fluke; they were there because Ontario, yes, had the geology to offer, but we were able to offer the conditions to invest, and one of those conditions was the price of the electricity.

So when I hear this argument, "Oh, we've got to go to market forces. The private sector does it better. We weren't selling it at the true cost of electricity," you're going to tell me that the price we're charging for electricity today is the true cost? Has anybody looked at what's happened over the last five or six years? We used to have one entity that did everything for electricity. It was called Ontario Hydro. That meant you had one CEO, who got about a hundred thousand bucks a year; you had basically one administration; you had one payroll; you had one of everything in order to run a large public utility. We've now gone to eight corporations or agencies, where we pay eight different CEOs, in some cases, over \$2 million a year, depending on what agency they're at. They all have their own payroll departments; they all have their own accounting departments; they all have their own everything because they're no longer one entity. We've broken it up into a number of different little companies, all of which have their own overhead.

1730

We now pay more for electricity, not only because we've deregulated the price to the market, but we're having to pay for all of these agencies and corporations to provide their part of the business of delivering electricity. When I get my electricity bill at home, it says that I pay for the generation of electricity, I now pay for

the transmission of electricity, I now pay for the delivery of electricity to my home and I pay for debt retirement. You look at your hydro bill and there's more than just 11 cents—11.5 cents if you're a resident; eight to nine cents if you're industry. You're not just paying that for electricity; you're paying for all the other stuff.

People understand that you're having to pay more, but there are two reasons we have to pay more: One, we've deregulated the price of electricity. We've said that we will turn the policy of 100 years in the province on its head in order to go from a policy that said that we deliver electricity at cost and sell it at cost to one where we've gone to the marketplace, and now we've got to support all of these different entities we've created that have been spun out of Ontario Hydro. So now we've got, rather than having one utility that was much more efficient—imagine breaking your company up into 10 parts and saying, "I'm going to pay for 10 new CEOs. I'm going to pay for 10 of everything." That's going to save you money? Come on, John Tory. You're in the business sector; you understand this.

One of the reasons we're paying so much is that we've gone from one large utility to a whole bunch of different small companies, which all have their own administration and crap to put on the bill. We're paying more because we deregulated the price, and we're paying more because we went and broke up what used to be Ontario Hydro into a whole bunch of different organizations—not to talk about what it does to the administration of that. Has anybody dealt with the ESA lately, the Electrical Safety Authority? Ah, I see members' eyes roll. There used to be a time that it was really easy, right? If the person was an individual at home and needed an electrician to come in and wire up their house because they were building a new house, it was simple: The electrician went to Ontario Hydro and applied for a permit, which was fairly cheap; the electrician would go and do the work; Ontario Hydro would come and do the inspection, disconnection and reconnection, and away you went. Now you've got to go through various agencies to make this happen. You have to deal with a multitude of different organizations to do what used to be done by one company. It's become very bureaucratic. When you're looking for somebody who has made the decision so that you can get to the decision-maker, everybody's hiding behind everybody else's agency. It's a real dog's breakfast out there.

We've gone from having a very efficient utility to having a whole bunch of little companies, some of them larger than others, and all of them having to work through their own administration and the cost of that, which basically added nine layers of bureaucracy where we used to have one. And we're defending that? The government is saying that's a good thing?

Listen, I remember the last election. The Liberals were apoplectic; they were opposed to the government's plan of deregulating electricity and privatizing the system. Dalton McGuinty had it in writing. All of a sudden, whoops, he became the Premier, and all of a sudden he changes his policy. I'm saying, aside from the—I can't



use that word; it would be unparliamentary—Dalton the Fiberal, as they would call him; the issue is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** “Fiberal” is not a bad word, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** It has been ruled out of order in the past. I will ask you to withdraw it again.

**Mr. Bisson:** I will withdraw. Can I use the word “Liberal”?

**The Acting Speaker:** I don’t think you can use that one either. You’re going to have to find a new word.

**Mr. Bisson:** I can’t think of very many good ones for the word “Liberal,” Mr. Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** I withdraw. I think it gets ridiculous, the words we can’t use in this Legislature over a period of time, but that’s a whole other debate.

I just say that we’re now in a situation where we have really turned the economic development part of what hydro was all about on its head, and we’re now having to pay a lot more than we ever have before.

Here’s the interesting part. The government says, “We’re going to get rid of all coal-fired plants.” First of all, let’s understand how much electricity we generate in this province and where it comes from. About 25,000 megs is what we’re able to generate in the province of Ontario, for a demand of around 21,000 to 22,000 megawatts, depending on what’s going on. Anyway, the long and short of the story is that about a third of the generation comes from coal, about a third of it comes from falling water and about a third of it comes from basically nuclear generation. The government says, “I’m going to take out a third by 2007”—whoops; no, they just changed that to 2009. And they don’t have a plan to replace the third. We’re now going to take out of the Ontario hydro system a third of our generation capacity and we haven’t said how we’re going to replace it. So I think the gig is pretty simple: The government wants to go by way of nuclear. That’s where they’re going. So they’re saying, “Well, we’re taking coal out.” They’re not prepared to go down the road of falling water, which is hydroelectric generation—which is the cheapest, by the way—and they obviously don’t want to invest in coal, because they’re getting rid of it, and you can’t put up enough windmills and gas-fired turbines and others because they’re too expensive. The only affordable alternative, in their view, not mine, is to go nuclear. I’m just saying that that is what this is all about. It’s about a government that has decided to go back down the way of Darlington, where we spent billions of extra dollars in order to build hydrogenation by way of the nuclear industry.

I just have to repeat what my leader, Mr. Hampton, said earlier in the debate on that particular issue: It’s a really expensive alternative. How much have we spent for Darlington? Was it around \$12 billion? Just help me out; I can’t remember the number offhand. It cost us about \$12 billion to build Darlington. To replace what Darlington has to be, we’re going to have to pay three times that in order to replace the coal-fired generation that we have in the province of Ontario.

So I say to the government, it’s bad enough that you continue down the road of deregulating the price of electricity and sending it to the market, which is driving jobs out of Ontario, especially northern Ontario. It’s bad enough that you basically broke up the entity called Ontario Hydro and created these eight or nine little organizations, some bigger than others, that are costing us more money to administer. But at the end of the day you’re going to put us into one of the highest options as a means of generating electricity. It just, to me, is absolutely nuts, because what we’re doing is we’re going to take the hydro price and increase it even more.

I get phone calls at my office, Mr. Speaker, as you and all other members do, from all kinds of constituents. Mr. Loreto, who called me earlier this week, was looking at his hydro bill and said, “My God, Mr. Bisson, what’s going on? My hydro bill—look at this. I decided to pull my hydro bill out from years before and I looked at what it is now. Now I pay a delivery charge for this, an extra charge for this, I pay this, I pay that. I’m paying more money now”—and I don’t have the numbers in front of me but he was paying huge amounts of money more than he paid before. He said, “I used to pay \$25 a month” in order to maintain this particular little apartment unit that he has, and he was now paying 250 bucks, about five years later, because of everything that has happened to the system. And people like this are on fixed incomes; they’re pensioners. What do you do when you’ve got a pension cheque coming in and you don’t get the big increases but everything else starts to go up, like electricity prices? At one point you just can’t take it anymore. It’s the same in industry. The government has to recognize that it has to stop this. People like Mr. Loreto and others across the province cannot have their utility rates, their electricity rates, go up to the degree that they did.

I’ll end on this point because I’ve only got a couple of minutes left: the issue of what this has meant to northern Ontario. We have lost tens of thousands of jobs in northern Ontario because of this electricity policy. We now have Tembec in Smooth Rock Falls that wants to shut down their plant. I think what they’re up to is that they want to shut down that plant so they can use their power dams to cross-subsidize Kapuskasing as a means of being able to reduce the high electricity prices they’re paying in Kapuskasing. They have a kraft mill in Smooth Rock Falls, they have a paper mill in Kap, and they’re saying, “We can cross-subsidize our electricity prices in Kap as a way of doing it.” I say, directly at the feet of the government, hydro policies are directly going to affect what’s going to happen in Smooth Rock Falls. If Smooth Rock Falls goes down, Lecours Lumber, which sells 30% of their chips to Smooth Rock Falls, is going to have a problem trying to selling their chips. Most people don’t understand that but the entire forest industry is integrated. You cut the tree; it goes to the sawmill. The sawmill takes the dimensional lumber and the rest of it, which becomes chips, goes to kraft and pulp mills. They don’t round lumber the way they used to. So now you’ve got



Tembec in Timmins, which sells about 50% of its chip production into Smooth Rock Falls; you've got Lecours north of Hearst—Constance Lake—which sells about 30% of its chips into Smooth Rock Falls. Those two particular plants, as a result of electricity prices, are going to be in jeopardy of closing down because of this government's policy.

1740

I say you've got to wake up over there, guys. You've got to wake up to the fact that the energy policies you've created are killing northern Ontario. The quicker you wake up, the better we'll be able to work at trying to find a solution to stabilize electricity prices and bring them back down again so that we don't end up shipping all of the new investment that is being made in the industry out of Ontario, to jurisdictions like Manitoba and Quebec, because they have lower electricity prices.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate. Although I have a few little problems with the motion, they're not enough for me to vote against it, because the intent of this is that this government's electricity policy is nuts and has got to change.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's certainly time to revisit the purpose of this afternoon's important debate and bring civility and non-partisan comments to the debate.

I'm just going to reflect on our leader John Tory's summation here and the important leadership that's evident in the summation: "To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation ... and that no ... source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it."

I think that's a very, very important element of what all parties today are trying to say, with perhaps one exception.

I think it's important to revisit for a few moments the beginning of the debate. You have to really start with Adam Beck, a brilliant leader, who said that we should have power at cost. But what he really meant was power at the cost of the economy. Really, we have never paid the true cost of power. We could argue that, but when this debate began under the NDP, it ultimately resulted in the formation of the Macdonald commission report in 1994-95.

Subsequent to that, under the leadership of the Conservative government at that time the NAOP committee, the nuclear asset optimization plan; a lot of good work with Sean Conway and Floyd Laughren and others. I was privileged to serve on that.

The next initiative under the Conservative leadership was the select committee on alternative fuels. A lot of work that was done on that committee is still very meaningful: looking at maintaining the balance of the energy, as well as the environment, as well as the economy.

The penultimate work was the work done by the electricity conservation supply task force. The task force was initiated by I believe Jim Wilson, who was the min-

ister at the time. I had the privilege to serve on that. There were eminently non-political people. I would just mention a few: Mike Crawley, for example, the president and CEO of AIM PowerGen; as well as Paul Norris, who is the president of the Ontario Waterpower Association. These were people who were stakeholders. There were knowledgeable people like Jan Peeters from Olameter; Tom Parkinson, who is the present CEO; and Rebecca MacDonald. There was an array of experts who came to a fundamental consensus, including the power workers, who were members of that committee.

The general resolution, signed off—I have the signed document here, as a member of that committee. They made one conclusive recommendation that was clear. The very first recommendation says, "Ontario faces a looming energy shortfall in the years ahead as coal-fired generation is taken out of service and existing nuclear plants ... end ... their ... operating lives."

They said clearly in the evidence of the report that you could not survive without some redress to clean technologies. In fact it goes on in more detail under "Phase-out of coal," how ill thought the technology, without considering or at least scientifically examining the options.

But how they started this political demise: In their election booklet they promised to shut the coal plants by 2007. They knew then, they know now and they still refuse to respond with a reasonable response that our leader, John Tory—

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to make a few comments on the motion that was presented to the House today by the member from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey.

I had the great opportunity to be in the riding of the member from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey last Thursday. I was in the town of Caledon and I had the opportunity to meet Her Worship Mayor Marolyn Morrison, a delightful lady doing a very good job as mayor of that community. I was there to launch a program called Flip the Switch.

The Flip the Switch program was developed in co-operation with the town of Caledon and Bullfrog Power. Caledon is one of the first to adopt green power in the province of Ontario. On that day, I had the opportunity to meet the member's assistant, who was there to read a very laudatory letter about the agreement that was being signed by the town of Caledon and Bullfrog Power. Indeed, the president of that company, Tom Heintzman, was there and indicated in a public way that Bullfrog Power was becoming the first retailer in Ontario to supply 100% green electricity and that it was the policies of this government that allowed Bullfrog Power to develop. That was recognized on that day by the very laudatory letter that was read by the assistant of Mr. Tory.

Another point I'd like to make: It's of note that in the Toronto Star of April 19, 2006, there was an excellent article written by Ian Urquhart. The title of that article was "Opposition Bombast Veils Facts of Rate Hike." As he goes through the article, he articulates an interesting

position. He quotes from the New Democrats, "We acknowledge people must pay the true cost of electricity," and from the Conservatives, "John Tory is not going to make any promises he can't keep, including making a pledge on hydro rates 18 months before an election." It goes on to say, "This represents a change for Ontario politics. From 1993 to 2003 ... both NDP and Conservative governments" were advocating freezes that led to \$1 billion in debt being added to the cost of electricity in Ontario.

All three parties I think sense that the price of electricity is going up. The question is, how did we get there? We've provided a plan to the province that is building on new generation capacity, maximizing our existing transmission and generation assets, creating a culture of conservation in Ontario, and putting the infrastructure in place to ensure sound planning for Ontario's long-term electricity needs.

I note that in the next number of weeks we will be providing a response to the OPA report, which will provide the framework for Ontario's electricity future.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for debate has now expired.

Mr. Tory has moved that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government,

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians' electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals' irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls, and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario's economy, chase potential investment from the province, and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

To recognize that a well-planned, informed, and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be

shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it. Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Tory, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Martiniuk, Gerry	Yakabuski, John
Horwath, Andrea	Miller, Norm	
Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bartolucci, Rick	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Bentley, Christopher	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Millroy, John	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 41.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion to be lost.

It now being after the hour of 6 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45 this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Mercredi 3 mai 2006**

### **PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

<b>Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation, projet de loi 109, <i>M. Gerretsen</i></b>	
Adoptée.....	3507
<b>Loi de 2006 sur la Semaine de la sensibilisation au harcèlement sexuel, projet de loi 110, <i>M. Hoy</i></b>	
Adoptée.....	3508

### **DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

<b>Semaine de l'éducation</b>	
M <sup>me</sup> Pupatello.....	3509
M. Klees.....	3512
M. Marchese.....	3513

### **QUESTIONS ORALES**

<b>Championnat mondial de hockey junior</b>	
M. McNeely.....	3519
M. Watson.....	3519
M. Lalonde.....	3519

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 3 May 2006

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Ontario Provincial Police</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	3505
<b>World Press Freedom Day</b>	
Mr. Wong .....	3505
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Sterling .....	3505
<b>Energy conservation</b>	
Mr. Ramal .....	3506
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	3506
<b>CANUSA Games</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	3506
<b>Alternative energy sources</b>	
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	3506
<b>Energy policy</b>	
Mr. Duguid .....	3507
<b>Anniversary of Polish Constitution</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht .....	3507

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Residential Tenancies Act, 2006,</b>	
Bill 109, <i>Mr. Gerretsen</i>	
Agreed to .....	3507
<b>Sexual Harassment Awareness</b>	
<b>Week Act, 2006, Bill 110, <i>Mr. Hoy</i></b>	
Agreed to .....	3508
Mr. Hoy .....	3508

## MOTIONS

<b>Consideration of private members' public bills</b>	
Mr. Bradley .....	3508
Agreed to .....	3508
<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Bradley .....	3508
Agreed to .....	3508

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Education Week</b>	
Ms. Pupatello .....	3509
Mr. Klees .....	3512
Mr. Marchese .....	3513
<b>Landlord and tenant legislation</b>	
Mr. Gerretsen .....	3510
Mr. Hardeman .....	3512
Mr. Marchese .....	3513

## Health care workers

Mr. Smitherman .....	3511
Ms. Scott .....	3512
Ms. Martel .....	3513

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	3514
Mr. McGuinty .....	3514
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	3515
Mr. McGuinty .....	3515
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	3516
Mr. McGuinty .....	3516
<b>Assistance to families</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	3517
Mr. Gerretsen .....	3517
Mrs. Meilleur .....	3517
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	3517
Mr. McGuinty .....	3518
<b>Taxi industry</b>	
Mr. Tabuns .....	3518
Mr. McGuinty .....	3518
<b>World junior hockey championship</b>	
Mr. McNeely .....	3519
Mr. Watson .....	3519
Mr. Lalonde .....	3519
<b>Transit tax credit</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	3519
Mr. Takhar .....	3520
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. Kormos .....	3520
Mr. Smitherman .....	3520
<b>Firefighters</b>	
Mr. Levac .....	3521
Mr. Peters .....	3521
<b>Landfill</b>	
Ms. MacLeod .....	3521
Ms. Broten .....	3521
Mr. Sterling .....	3522
<b>Tire disposal</b>	
Mr. Tabuns .....	3522
Ms. Broten .....	3522
<b>Youth crime prevention</b>	
Mr. Hoy .....	3522
Mrs. Chambers .....	3523
<b>Education labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	3523
Ms. Pupatello .....	3523

## PETITIONS

<b>Landfill</b>	
Mr. Sterling .....	3523
Ms. MacLeod .....	3524
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mrs. Mitchell .....	3524
Mr. Arnott .....	3524
Mr. Sergio .....	3526
Mr. Hardeman .....	3526
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Milloy .....	3524
Mr. O'Toole .....	3525
<b>Nursing staff</b>	
Mr. Hoy .....	3525
<b>Border security</b>	
Mr. Leal .....	3525
<b>Native land dispute</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	3525
<b>Access to health care</b>	
Mr. Sergio .....	3526
<b>Recycling</b>	
Mr. Chudleigh .....	3526
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	3526

## OPPOSITION DAY

<b>Energy policy, opposition day number 1, <i>Mr. Tory</i></b>	
Mr. Tory .....	3527
Mrs. Cansfield .....	3529
Mr. Yakabuski .....	3532
Mr. Hampton .....	3533
Ms. Smith .....	3536
Mr. Arnott .....	3538
Mrs. Sandals .....	3539
Mr. Barrett .....	3539
Mr. Bisson .....	3540
Mr. O'Toole .....	3543
Mr. Leal .....	3543
Negated .....	3544

Continued overleaf





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**Speaker**  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

**Président**  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CLEAN WATER ACT, 2006

### LOI DE 2006 SUR L'EAU SAINE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 12, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à protéger les sources existantes et futures d'eau potable et à apporter des modifications complémentaires et autres à d'autres lois.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? The member for Toronto–Danforth.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** I appreciate the wild enthusiasm from the government benches.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, thanks for this opportunity to continue where I left off when I spoke a few weeks ago. It was my inaugural speech, and I have to say I do owe a debt of thanks to my colleagues in the House who've done their best over the intervening time to educate me as to the work of the Legislature.

When we last convened to discuss the act, my parting comments were made with regard to the big pipe, and I want to return to that issue, given its negative impact on the watershed in the GTA and how that action undercuts the protection of water sources, directly contrary to what I understand to be the intention of the bill before us, and I think it speaks to the actual commitment of this government to protect source water.

We in legislative assemblies are consistently faced with a situation in which many interests want things to continue on as they are. They want business as usual to be the order of the day. They want no change, and certainly they don't want change that is going to undercut their ability to make whatever profit they need to make. I would say that the sanctioning of the big pipe by the McGuinty government is an illustration, and a very stark one, of the status quo trumping the protection of source waters. Again, it gives me reason to wonder whether or not the passage of this act will result in any actual protection of source water.

In 2004, on a very sleepy Friday afternoon in August, a long weekend, the McGuinty government gave in to pressure from developers, from lobbyists, and approved a

project that threatens the source of Toronto's drinking water supply in a variety of ways, some of which I was able to touch on briefly the last time I addressed this House. I mentioned last time that this sewer system, this big pipe, this expansion, will remove 60 billion litres of groundwater from the aquifer system underlying the Oak Ridges moraine. In effect, a backyard swimming pool of water is being withdrawn every minute out of the moraine's aquifers, and this will continue every minute between now and 2007, and that's in the course of time while the big pipe is being put into the ground. These are the very aquifers that feed the Rouge, the Humber and the Don rivers, all of which drain into Lake Ontario, the GTA's source of drinking water.

Last night I was at the Green Toronto Awards at Toronto city hall and I had an opportunity to speak with Jim Robb from the Friends of the Rouge Watershed. Jim has been one of the most prominent figures in the fight against the big pipe. He has been an eyewitness to the damage that the pipe's construction has already caused to the groundwater supply.

### 1850

The last time I spoke, I mentioned how this past summer 120 wells went dry in York region and the water table has dropped from a five-metre to a 55-metre level over 65 square miles during phase 1 construction of the pipe. Jim actually brought visual evidence of the dried-up stream beds here to Queen's Park last October as part of his ongoing effort to bring the McGuinty government to its senses and reverse its permission for construction of the big pipe in York region.

Friends of the Rouge has consistently drawn attention to how the big pipe also creates conditions for water contamination. This sewage pipe is being laid very deep, right into the bed of the aquifer system. So if there was a leak, you could have E. coli and other contaminants seeping directly into the surrounding groundwater supply.

In one of my previous lives, I was a property manager. I had contractors come in, put in waterlines, drainage lines, and dealt, in my time at the city, with sewer contracts, watching the documents that were put before city council for approval. It's very standard practice to have waterlines located above sewer lines so that should there be a break in a sewer line, the chances of that contaminating the waterline are, if not eliminated, dramatically reduced. That is a very practical step we have developed in this society to protect the quality of the water that flows into our homes.

So what have we done with the big pipe? In effect, we've put a sewer line through the middle of the



waterline and hoped that that water, which supplies wells, probably supplies groundwater to the municipalities in that region—we have hoped that sewer line will never crack, will never break, will never leak into the water supply of those rural residents who depend on the high quality of that water for their homes, for their farm animals.

Imagine what would happen if a faulty joint or a natural event like a tremor caused a break in this massive sewer pipe. Geologists have already provided warnings that a bedrock fault line passes near the proposed sewer route and that earth tremors are entirely probable. Even a very small leak in a pipe carrying several hundred million litres of sewage every day can have a huge, catastrophic impact on source waters within the area and even outlying drinking water sources.

The government has brought forward this clean water protection bill, talking about protecting source waters, but they're putting a sewage pipe in the middle of a drinking water source with no thought as to how they would decontaminate that water, should it break or a leak occur. What do we do? What do we say to those farmers? What do we say to those rural residents, those cottagers, when they draw on their well water and find it's contaminated? How many years would it take, if it could be cleaned up, before it could be cleaned up?

To present a bill like this, to say you're in favour of protecting source waters, and to go ahead with something like the big pipe presents a fundamental contradiction in behaviour and thinking.

Environmentalists, citizens and civic leaders from across the GTA have joined together in loud opposition to the big pipe sewer project. The city of Toronto council, in the interests of protecting the rivers and streams that come into this city, have spoken out against the big pipe, and city council passed a motion calling for a stop to work on the big pipe and a full environmental assessment of the entire big pipe network.

At the Toronto city council meeting where that motion was passed, the government's own Environmental Commissioner, Gordon Miller, made a deputation that threw grave doubt on York region's assurances that the big pipe would have negligible environmental impact.

It isn't the first time that the province's Environmental Commissioner has spoken out against the Liberal government for approving the big pipe. On several previous occasions, like the release of his 2004 annual report, he spoke to the big pipe's negative impact on Lake Ontario and the Great Lakes basin, the source of drinking water for the GTA and a majority of Ontarians.

Aside from sanctioning the big pipe, the McGuinty government has been remiss on ensuring that water quality in the Great Lakes has been protected on other fronts. During their tenure, they have not made the investments needed to implement remedial action plans to clean up many of the areas of concern, or "hot spots," found around the Great Lakes basin. Toronto is one of those hot spots, as is Hamilton harbour. Implementing those remedial action plans is important to guaranteeing

the quality of the water that we draw from Lake Ontario. Toronto, Hamilton and other jurisdictions have plans that are ready to go, but they need the province to be a partner in their execution, not just in their development. If this government, this McGuinty government, is serious about protecting drinking water, as they claim, then they need to fund the implementation of remedial action plans.

I don't believe they're serious. I'm not seeing action that would say, "Yes, we want to protect source water; we want to protect the drinking water; we want to protect the water resources of this province." So instead of increasing their contribution under the Canada-Ontario agreement to implement the remedial action plans, the McGuinty government is content simply to reannounce on a yearly basis the \$50 million that the Harris Tories allocated towards Great Lakes cleanup in 2002, money that was to be meted out over a five-year span. Now it's an annual photo op. Toronto's plan alone costs over \$1 billion to implement and the Hamilton harbour plan requires between \$550 million and \$600 million. We aren't seeing the action on this that we need to see.

Recently, a friend of mine who coaches rowing clubs talked to me about her experience rowing in the Toronto ship channel, down in the port area in my riding. She said the toxic compounds—let's call them the volatile organic compounds—that come up out of that water in the summer are very strong. The hotter it gets, the more comes out of that water, the more comes up to the surface. The Ontario Rowing Association requires that when there are competitions in the ship channel, there have to be showers, just in case someone falls out of one of the rowing shells. They have to be decontaminated.

These are gross visible pollutions or degradations of the environment, and the action that has been promised, that has been seen as necessary, is not happening. And when that's not happening, one has to ask how effective this bill will be. Where will the political will be to actually do what has to be done if the existing problems are not being attended to? In fact, in the case of the big pipe those problems are deepening, becoming more profound.

The other concern I have is that if you draft legislation for source water protection plans and you don't provide the resources necessary to implement them, then you don't get the results that you expect to see. So when I previously discussed the Clean Water Act in its current form, I noted that it does not provide the financial assurances to cash-strapped municipalities and conservation authorities, those who are required to implement, plan, administer source water protection plans over time. So I urged the implementation of water-taking fees so that there would be a source of income to protect our source water. Take those fees, designate them for source water protection and ensure that those authorities responsible for protecting our drinking water have a source of income so they can actually do the job they're supposed to do, because we know what happens when they don't do the job they're supposed to do. Enforcement does not occur; protection does not occur; we have an empty shell.



I'm not alone in calling for this. The government's own advisory committees, convened for the purposes of drafting this legislation, recommended this measure as well.

1900

Government members will be familiar with the volumetric water-taking fees that the McGuinty government promised in its approach to this whole issue in its 2003 election platform but has failed to deliver. I am confused about why the government isn't moving forward on this. Other provinces and states have water-taking fee regimes, so the argument that imposing water-taking fees could contravene trade agreements and provincial jurisdiction just doesn't hold water, if you will.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tabuns:** I know. It was weak but I had to throw it in.

One other promise that I want to note before my time comes to an end: The Liberal election platform in 2003 made promises regarding protection of our source waters. Page 7 of *Growing Strong Communities: The Ontario Liberal Plan for Clean, Safe Communities*, states, "We will protect our water from stream to tap by preventing it from getting polluted in the first place." This legislation doesn't do that. It's narrowly confined to yet-to-be-defined "wellhead protection areas." The government has significantly narrowed the scope of water protection in this legislation, far more than what was promised in their election platform in 2003.

I would say that this government is continuing to trade on whatever goodwill it has been able to engender in the last while from the environmental community. But increasingly it's not acting, putting forward bills that from the beginning are not designed to be effective and that are contradicted at every step by the larger actions the government is taking.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity, even though it is brief, to speak to the issues raised by my friend across the way. I want to remind him that this legislation is a balanced approach. It's part of our government's comprehensive, larger commitment to protect the environment and the water that we drink in all of our communities. It's part and parcel of our plan to protect the Great Lakes, to rebuild our infrastructure and to have water conservation measures, and the Clean Water Act demonstrates how serious we are about protecting that water.

In the case of a conflict between the source protection plan and a zoning bylaw, an official plan, the source protection plan will prevail. Where there's a conflict between a provision of the source protection plan and a plan or policy in another piece of legislation that affects the quality or quantity of water, the provision that provides the greatest protection to the quality and quantity of drinking water will prevail. If there's a conflict between the Clean Water Act and any other act or regulation, again, the provision that provides the greatest

protection to the quality or quantity of drinking water would prevail. That's how serious we are about ensuring that we protect drinking water across this province.

Let's be clear: The implementation of source protection plans within watersheds that drain into the Great Lakes will provide significant protection to the Great Lakes, because the Clean Water Act provides me, as minister, with a lot of authority with respect to how we are going to manage the Great Lakes.

I also had an opportunity, since the introduction and dealing with second reading, to travel across the province and join my colleagues in Peterborough, Ottawa, Orléans, Belleville, Quinte and Walkerton. We only need to spend a moment talking to the community in Walkerton to remind all of us in this House why we are bringing forward this comprehensive legislation, about which, when this legislation is out in full force, I believe I'll proudly be able to say that we are protecting drinking water from source to tap across the province.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the speech by the member from Toronto-Danforth. I think it was really important and really indicative of the concerns that people have brought to him and to the previous member for Toronto-Danforth around the big pipe because, notwithstanding what the minister had to say in her questions and comments, the bottom line is that you get judged on how you behave, how you act and the things you actually do, as opposed to just the legislation. It was quite disturbing for many people to see the government's illustration of their commitment or lack thereof in the implementation of the big pipe. The member for Toronto-Danforth did a very good job describing not only what's problematic about that pipe—I know he talked about the possibility of risk to the source waters because of the possibility, for example, of a breach; the possibility of something happening, a break; the possibility of a natural event taking place and causing a problem with that big pipe, and then the result that would occur would be devastating for the communities that rely on the water in that area. The member also mentioned that similar concerns came forward from the Environmental Commissioner around that same issue in regards to the big pipe, particularly the impact on Ontario's Great Lakes basin.

Then the member talked a little bit about something that was quite near and dear to my heart, the RAPs, the remedial action plans. You really don't understand the scope of these plans unless you take the time to spend with the people who put them together. I know people like John Hall in the city of Hamilton have worked tireless volunteer hours on our RAP and on trying to move government toward funding the implementation of various initiatives that will bring our Hamilton "hot spot" harbour back to a good quality.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I look forward to and enjoy entering into the debate once again. I just wanted to talk about the question that was raised by the member opposite about the time required to get this whole process implemented. There is a debate by some



that we should move quicker, and by others that we should take a lot more time.

In the next five years, there are really two phases that are happening. There are about two more years of scientific work that have to be done. You'll recall that our government has provided the money to both municipalities and conservation authorities for them to do the scientific work. I can tell you that local landowners, industries, farmers and municipalities will not buy into this bill if they are not assured that the science that underpins it is sound. That's why that work is being done first.

Of course, there will be the development of the plan, and to make that happen, we envision an extensive series of consultations. We need to have buy-in from those people who are affected in the watershed or in the ground watershed. That is very key.

So we feel that (1) we have to have things based on science, and (2) we have to have consultation. Those are the things that I think set this bill apart from previous attempts by other governments in past days as to how one deals with this.

It is not a top-down process. There will always be questions where there will be an honest disagreement on the facts, and the minister retains her powers to deal with that. There is an extensive process that allows people to appeal at various stages. I can tell you that if a committee were to uncover an imminent or serious threat to drinking water, they are required under I believe it's section 24 to notify the ministry so that action can be taken to protect sources of drinking water. I'm sure everyone in this House would agree to that.

But it is important for us to get the right balance in regard to timing. We must have science, or people will not agree, and we must give people the time to consult and reach that consensus as we together protect our valuable sources of drinking water.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I appreciate the opportunity to lend a few comments from a local perspective, I guess is the best way to approach this. The Grand River Conservation Authority in the area that I represent along the Grand River, which is the largest in southern Ontario, has two things that I think we need to understand. The conservation authority itself has some of the most reputable scientists in the world. Their work in water and water protection, source water protection, and the delivery of water to our communities along the Grand River is second to none. I want to put on the record that I'm very co-operative and very supportive of the work they do as scientists, not just conservationists and not just people who plant trees. We should know that they take the protection of water very seriously, and I thank them.

I also thank the municipalities that work so well with the conservation authority. The Grand River Conservation Authority has great partnerships in the cities and the municipalities all along the river. That's the one point I want to drive home that the bill also does in terms of strengthening the planning process by pulling local communities together, and all the stakeholders, through the conservation authority. In this case I'm absolutely con-

vinced that that's going to happen in a very positive way for the protection of our water.

**1910**

The second part I want to mention and compliment the minister on is the First Nations part of the puzzle. We have an opportunity here to learn from our First Nations brothers' and sisters' thousands of years of understanding how you treat your environment. I say to you very respectfully that this bill has an opportunity to start bringing us together to rely on their abilities and help them in their water protection issues.

I want to work very strongly with the federal government, and I want us to work very clearly together to ensure that we take care of those water issues that First Nations are facing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Toronto-Danforth, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Tabuns:** I appreciate the comments from the Minister of the Environment and her parliamentary assistant. The question I would have for them, and I'd be very interested in hearing their response to this: Let's say that the body responsible for protecting source water in the Oak Ridges moraine filed their plan and said, "The big pipe is a threat to drinking water in our area. We've looked at the reports. We don't have the confidence that this sewer pipe can be sealed, and sealed off from groundwater." So the reality is that this water could in fact be contaminated by a leak in the big pipe. Would the minister take action to shut down that big pipe?

What has happened so far is that the minister, in fact the McGuinty government, has allowed a project to go forward that puts a sewer pipe in the middle of a source of drinking water. If you ran a sewer pipe through the middle of a river, would you expect a calm approach on the part of the local authorities? Would you expect that to be approved? I don't think so.

When you put a sewer pipe through the middle of an aquifer, through the middle of the source of drinking water for a large number of people, you are putting those people at risk. How tightly, how closely, will that water be monitored?

I have friends in a rural area. They send in water sample bottles every year or so to see the quality of their water. Well, I have to ask, how long will things go on before a problem surfaces? I've asked the minister to speak to this. Will this act—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Ask her tomorrow.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Well, questions and comments. I know I don't necessarily get answers but I'll see whether I get an answer. Then I'll see whether or not they've got substance on their side.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I'm very pleased to rise this evening and speak to Bill 43. I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the member from Peterborough. I know there's some disappointment from across the way, but it will be equally riveting from the member from Peterborough.

I want to say as well that I will be supporting Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. I feel that by introducing this bill,



the government is taking action to protect the sources of our shared drinking water.

Ontarians deserve clean, safe drinking water, and that means taking preventive action in order to ensure that. I want to make special emphasis: If this bill is passed, it will complete 22 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, and that's quite an achievement.

I want to say that we should never forget what happened in Walkerton six years ago. As many of the members in the House know, my riding comes right up to Walkerton, so I've had the privilege of hearing the stories coming from Walkerton. I can tell you that that day changed the history of that community, and not only that community, for a very long time. You hear the stories of young children who will continue to need medical help probably for the rest of their lives. When we talk about clean water, when we talk about what the people of Ontario need today, we cannot forget what happened in Walkerton. I know that sometimes there are some comments made about how we're going too far, too hard, too fast, but I do say, especially to the members across the way, if you had the opportunity to come and hear the stories from Walkerton, possibly if we had done more work in the past, it would have made a difference.

But I do want to thank the Minister of the Environment for coming to Walkerton, meeting with the concerned citizens in Walkerton, just to hear the stories. The people want to tell the stories of what happened. They don't want the people of Ontario to forget their stories. We also, both of us, had the opportunity to meet with members of the board from the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, to listen to their current initiatives and their future plans. I want to take this opportunity to quote the mayor of the municipality of Brockton, Charlie Bagnato. The minister had the opportunity to also make the announcement of the funding for this source water protection plan. I quote Mayor Bagnato's comments from the Walkerton Herald-Times.

"Brockton Mayor Charlie Bagnato agreed.

"A safe, secure water supply is a crucial factor in ensuring healthy, prosperous communities," he said. "We are working with the province and our partners in the region to protect our water now and into the future."

The mayor understands what is needed and what we need to move forward to ensure that our water will be safe for our children and our children's children. But the Clean Water Act sets out above all else prevention. This is something we have talked about over the years, but we need to do more. Keeping contaminants from entering the source of our drinking water and making sure that we do not deplete our resources is something that needs to be enshrined in legislation. Not only is it beneficial to us as humans, beneficial to the environment, but it's also about unit cost as well. The less we have to treat our water, it also brings it in at a lower cost. So not only is it a benefit to our health, our well-being, but it's also a benefit to our pocketbook.

Conservation authorities have recently been given funding to help with scientific studies and other planning

costs to lay the foundation for source water protection across the province. Many of you don't know this information, but I have three conservation authorities in my riding of Huron-Bruce: the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and also the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. They have all been very excellent to work with. They're very willing to help the province provide clean water for all.

In each and every watershed, source protection plans will be firmly based on science. Each watershed must undertake a comprehensive scientific assessment of the threats to the drinking water and carefully evaluate the level of risk posed by any activity before any action is taken. And the plans—and I feel this is very important to emphasize—will be developed locally with stakeholder input.

The Great Lakes, as many of you also know, especially the greatest of all lakes—that would be Lake Huron—

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan):** Lake Superior, by Thunder Bay.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Well, since it's my opportunity to speak, I get to say it's Lake Huron. But the lakes are so important to us in Ontario. Not only do we swim in them, sail in them, but we also rely on them as an economic driver. In the riding that I have the privilege to represent, tourism is our second-largest industry, so when we talk about the Clean Water Act we realize how connected the lake system is as well. That's why it's important to move forward with our source protection plans. The watersheds are bordering our Great Lakes. So we know the importance, we understand the importance, and I believe that the people of Ontario also understand the importance.

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People from the rural and agricultural communities, including my own riding, have raised some concerns with this bill. The province has committed to support planning costs. That was one of the initial concerns. That has been addressed. Some \$67.5 million for source protection planning has been allocated.

Another concern was the financial hardship. There has been a recognition that there may be hardship cases, and it's proposing to develop an approach to address the situations on a case-by-case basis. So there have been concerns, they have been acknowledged, and they have been dealt with. Collaboration, partnerships—these are key elements for the proposed approach, and not only proposed; it is how it is being done. The proposed legislation contains clear consultation requirements at each stage in the process, and input from the community and local stakeholders will be taken into consideration before any decision can be made or will be made.

One of the things that I think we must understand is that another concern that was raised from the rural communities was the overall scope. It's been clearly identified to bring forward municipal water sources. This will provide the most benefit to the people of Ontario. So when we talk about moving forward, the concerns that I



heard from my rural and agricultural communities have been identified and they have been met. I want to thank the minister and her PA for all the work they have done. This is, in my opinion, legislation that is long overdue.

I know one of the concerns that is addressed from the rural communities is that somehow nutrient management gets thrown into clean water—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Such support from across the way. I would argue that if this piece of legislation had come forward before the Nutrient Management Act, we would have been able to clearly identify the areas we needed to focus on. I believe this piece should have come forward first. I believe there was not enough of a scientific approach taken to identify where the contaminants could be, where this clearly, by science, lays out the planning that will be done. It's taken time, it's comprehensive, and with lots of consultations: very important.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I listened to the member and I'm somewhat disappointed. Her argument hasn't been established. She has 10 minutes left. I would seek unanimous consent that she complete her remaining 10 minutes to make her arguments. Someone must have stolen half your speech.

Actually, I see this bill as an assault on the liberty of individuals, while at the same time I respect the importance of safe, clean and available drinking water.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** If the member from the other side who is speaking—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would the member take his seat, please. Point of order?

**Mrs. Mitchell:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No? And you don't want unanimous consent? I have to get this all clear.

**Mr. O'Toole:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay. Continue.

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member for Huron-Bruce basically had 20 minutes and only used 10. She did request unanimous consent initially to divide her time with Jeff Leal. She didn't complete her time. I'm speaking to 43 and responding in the two-minute limited time, including your interruption. I was waiting for Jeff Leal to speak, and it appears he's been silenced on this bill.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member for Peterborough—perhaps some would think he should be silenced, but I didn't say that in any official sense. I have the greatest respect for the member for Peterborough, because I know Gary Stewart watches carefully.

I look at this bill, and our member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—there are three sections that the public should be listening to. There's section 48 on the perimeter costs and downloading; section 83, which is the expropriation issue, because it really is the tenuous hand of government reaching into your property, taking your rights; and the immune-from-action section 89. If

they don't address these sections, this bill is difficult, and yet so important.

**Mr. Tabuns:** To speak to the member from Huron-Bruce, there's no question that what happened to Walkerton was a profound tragedy. It has shaped the thinking of people in this province, similar in many ways to the tainted blood scandal and tragedy. Justice Krever, when he assessed what happened there, called for precautions; he called for the use of the precautionary principle when human life was at stake. I have no doubt that the member who spoke today spoke about the need to protect not just her community but other communities throughout this province.

My concern, and I want to go back to it because I think there's a simple piece of logic here that seems to be shunted aside in this debate: Is there anyone in this House who, responsible for a local water supply, let's say a local water reservoir, would put a sewer pipe through the middle of that reservoir? Is there anyone here who would manage a property and would put a sewer pipe through the well that supplies water to that property? I don't think there's anyone sitting here in this chamber who would do that, because they wouldn't put the users of that well water, the users of the water from that reservoir, at risk. But, in fact, that's what the big pipe does. It puts a very large sewer pipe through the middle of an aquifer that supplies water to this greater Toronto area. Fundamentally, what it says is that this government will put forward a bill and, whatever the virtues of the bill, the reality is that, on the ground, the water will not be protected the way it needs to be protected. We learned enough from Walkerton to say that there has to be a lot of care taken when you're talking about the water supply for any community.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I was very pleased last week to have the minister, Ms. Broten, down to Orléans, where my community is really divided between three watersheds and we have very good conservation groups. They used to be called conservation authorities, but they didn't want the "authority" in there. They do have a lot of authority over what happens to the groundwater in our area. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority was very pleased to accept a cheque for \$267,000 from the minister. They've been doing excellent work with the Rideau Valley. Also, because Orléans is downstream from the city of Ottawa, downstream from the Rideau Valley, we're fortunate enough to be in the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. That was the decision that they took. Part of our municipality does go to the South Nation and the Raisin region. We had members from both those authorities there as well, because they realized the importance of groundwater.

I was involved in water supply in Prescott-Russell/SD&G for many years as a consulting engineer, and a lot of the problems came out because we didn't protect our groundwater. A lot of situations arose which could have been much like what happened in Walkerton. So now we have very good legislation coming out of that, and it's going to be legislation that protects the people and certainly not have something happen like Walkerton.



As a councillor in the city of Ottawa I felt very strongly about that, and I made a presentation to Justice O'Connor's committee when he came through. I think I was the only councillor who did it. I represented a rural ward of Cumberland at the time.

So I'm glad to see this legislation going through. It's extremely important for groundwater sources in Ontario, for the people who drink from those sources, and the sooner we pass this legislation, the better. I just want to commend the minister on the great work she's been doing for this legislation.

1930

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** In the brief time I have, I think one of the issues that is absent, quite frankly, from the discussion, particularly on the part of the government, is key to Justice O'Connor's report. I would like to quote where he states, "If the system is ... too expensive, the provincial government should make assistance available to lower the cost per household to a predetermined level."

I think that in understanding the complexity of water, I would just want to remind the members that there's a difference between surface water and groundwater and they're not to be confused.

The fact is that the kind of legislation we are looking at this evening is something that imposes a potential cost of enormous proportion, not only on our municipalities but on our individual landowners. It seems to me that in this bill we are looking at, there is no recognition of the kinds of cost factors that are inherent in this bill. While I believe there is no one who would argue against the need for safe drinking water, there is a cost to be paid. One of the things that I think the government must consider is that while it can say that it is answering a number of the recommendations—I believe this bill, they argue, represents 22 of the recommendations of Justice O'Connor—the issue is the important one: Who's paying?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Huron—Bruce, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** I do want to thank the members from Durham, Toronto—Danforth, Ottawa—Orléans and York North.

I want to say, in remarks that were made—I also want to talk about the cost of not taking action. That's the flip side of the argument as well. There has to be a day that you say, "Today we're moving forward," otherwise the journey never begins. Clearly this is based on a scientific approach. Care is being taken. It talks about our water system in its entirety. So I would say to the members of the House that if we don't begin, if we don't start addressing some of the concerns, the cost of not taking action may be greater than the cost of taking action.

Those are the concerns that we talked about. Those were concerns that were addressed, those were concerns that will be addressed, but we have to start with knowledge—a base, a foundation—and that's moving forward with a scientific approach. That's where this is going. It's relying on local input; it's relying on local knowledge. It's receiving input from our local communities, from our representatives. Those are being covered off.

I say to the members across the way that the cost of not taking action was how I began the 10 minutes that I was allowed to speak tonight. We know that that no longer is an option. Now we must begin the journey of implementing the recommendations. I can tell you that 22 from the O'Connor report—this is a huge step in the right direction.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** I'm sure it will come as no surprise to you that I'm going to disagree with the member for Huron—Bruce.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Oh, not tonight.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Oh, yes. The government decided to bring in Bill 43, a vague piece of empowering legislation that gives little answers to the people who are going to be most affected by it.

We won't debate one issue: Every single person in this room, in this building, in this city, in this province, in this country and I'm sure around the world believes in safe drinking water. There is a question, however, as to what we think we can do to ensure that. I can tell you one thing, and you don't have to be a scientist to know this—there is nothing you can do to absolutely, positively guarantee safe water. You can have no amount of legislation and no amount of money—nothing. Here's a government that is prepared to download the biggest download in the history of this province to municipalities and to individual landowners. Some estimates run as high as \$7 billion downloaded to people on private properties and municipalities in this province.

There's a very good reason why this wasn't enacted before: They couldn't afford it. But you people have decided that you're going to download it to the taxpayer. As my colleague from York North said—and by the way, when you people were running for election, you said, "We will implement every one of Justice O'Connor's recommendations." Well, it doesn't matter how many you implement if you stay away from the big one, and that is number 16, which says, "You want to bring it in, you've got to pay for it." Even in Manitoba, there's compensation. There's nothing in this bill that compensates a landowner, a farmer, and there's nothing in here that defines what activities can be deemed unlawful or unsafe for the water source that's being protected.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It's called an imminent threat to drinking water.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Who decides that? People who are out here in rural Ontario need to have some answers. First of all, this government wanted to have this bill passed before we recessed for the summer. They wanted it passed without any hearings. But we're going to have hearings. We must have hearings across this province so that people who are concerned about this legislation can have their say.

The farmers in this province are absolutely terrified of what this could mean to them. They are absolutely terrified of what could happen. We met with a group of farmers last week. They were here. They are terrified of what this bill could mean. There are no answers in this



bill. The bill contains only guarantees of power to conservation authorities, to municipal permit officials, all kinds of power to come onto one's land without any permits whatsoever.

We need to have clarification as to what this bill actually allows people to do and what it actually prevents people from doing on their land. As it is right now, there is nothing in there that—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Have you read the bill, John?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I have read as many of the sections as we need to. I would ask the member for Perth—Middlesex, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, tell me, is there something in the bill that tells you what activities can or cannot take place?

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It tells you the process exactly. You have to read the whole bill.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** The process? Well, I'm going to tell you, the people of Ontario do not believe this government when they put up their hands and say, "Trust us. We'll look after all of this in regulation. We'll take care of things in regulation." There have been all kinds of assurances given by the government to different groups: "Oh, we're not going to worry about that. We're not going to deal with that," but nothing in writing.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Science. Consultation.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Consultation? People don't trust you. People do not trust this government. I repeat myself: They could bring in a million bills and they can't guarantee that something won't go wrong. When you have negligence and incompetence coupled with drunkenness, you can have problems in this province. Walkerton is a wonderful example—"terrible" is a better word—a terrible example of what can happen when the weak links in the chain cause the whole thing to collapse.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Well, who's going to oversee the overseer? And who's going to oversee the overseer of the overseer? Do you see what I'm saying, to the member from Peterborough? There are no guarantees. When human beings are involved, you cannot absolutely guarantee anything. But you can guarantee one thing: You can guarantee that you are going to cost municipal rate-payers, through their municipalities, billions of dollars in this province, and you're going to cost individual land-owners possibly even more if you decide that activities carried out on their land are simply not acceptable.

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When you talk about protecting water sources of surface water now, we all have to understand that, in my riding, almost all of the water is taken from the surface, and when you have a river basin, it isn't coming down a cement tube. It's massive. It covers hundreds of thousands of acres of land, and anywhere in that basin is going to come under the auspices of this act, but there's nothing defined in here of how big that's going to be, what they're going to do to protect it.

Again, everybody wants to have as much assurance as possible of clean water, but you people have to be more straight about what you're trying to do here, and if you

are implementing something that is going to cost billions of dollars, you can't do it unless you're willing to pay for it.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Show me the \$7 billion.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Tell me what it's going to cost, then.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member from Perth—Middlesex—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You tell me. That's the figure I've been given.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** From who?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Farm groups.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member from Perth—Middlesex, come to order, please. I'd like to listen to the speaker.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Where's the information?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pardon me for interrupting you when you're standing. I apologize for that.

Where are the numbers from the ministry? Nothing.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You just want people to go along and say, "Oh, yeah, just take us to the cleaners. We trust you." Well, they don't.

We need to have some clarifications as to what this bill is going to do here in Ontario and what it's going to do to rural landowners and farmers who have been conducting activities that tomorrow, the day after the bill is enacted, some municipal permit official could come in and say, "I'm sorry, but you know what? You can't farm here anymore."

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It can't happen? Under this bill, it could.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** That's nonsense.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Yes, avenues for appeal and everything else. People would like to know in advance, what are you planning to do in this province? What are you planning to do with regard to people's land in this province? You're not getting a blank cheque. People won't give you a blank cheque, because they have seen what has happened in the past. They saw what happened with regulation 170/03. Only after tremendous opposition to what was going on has there been some pullback on that regulation, even to bring some semblance of common sense into the equation.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** In fairness, I'll say—and I see one of the members of the Ministry of the Environment staff, whom I will not name—some of those people were very good at listening to what some of the concerns on reg. 170/03 were and they've implemented some positive change. I've said that in the past, and I thank the Minister of the Environment at the time, Leona Dombrowsky, for listening to some of the recommendations we were bringing forward and that some of those people I represent were bringing forward. I appreciate the fact that there was some common sense and some listening, but they're not going to go for a blank cheque again here.



**Mr. Wilkinson:** It's going to committee.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Committee? Come on. We all know how long committees go: one day here, one day there. That's not enough. People need some definitive answers in this province as to what this bill is going to mean to them. They've got to have it.

I'm going to read some of the things that some people are saying about this bill, so you'll know that it's not just my words, because I have a feeling that some of those people over there don't actually believe what I say sometimes.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Jean-Marc, we'll talk later, but I've got a clock running.

"Many details to be determined, provincial regulations and guidance documents, details not finalized"—nothing. You want people to buy—

**Interjection:** Framework legislation.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Framework legislation? You want people to buy a pig in a poke here. They need to have some assurances in writing.

As a matter of fact, the very first line of the bill, in part I, states, "The purpose of this act is to protect existing and future sources of drinking water." See section 1. Now, when I talk to people from the Ontario Environmental Farm Coalition, they say that people in the ministry have said it's to protect municipal sources of drinking water. Perhaps I could have the Clerk's table confirm whether or not the word "municipal" is in there, Speaker. I can't see it, but my eyes are not the best. Maybe my colleague from York North knows. Is the word "municipal" in there? I don't see it. So when you want to tell people that that's what you're protecting, then put it in the bill. Can you tell me where it is in the bill?

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Yes, I can. I'll see you in committee.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Okay. I'd love to. Well, give me a hint now. I'll be glad to read it if it's there.

There are so many loose ends in this bill that it has created a tremendous amount of uncertainty. This is a complete download of the liability to the municipalities, more downloading to the municipalities.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** You're going to tell us about downloading, right?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I have never been party to a bit of downloading legislation in my entire political career—not once. But these people over here are responsible for this download, which could be the largest download in the history of the province of Ontario.

How much land and where? What activities will be regulated inside the designated areas? Nothing is being told about that. What is the expected implementation in operational interaction? Who pays for implementation? "The purpose of this act is to protect existing and future sources of drinking water": Here it is. The purpose statement casts a broad net: verbal assurance—verbal—to limit scope to municipal water, not confirmed in writing.

Surface water intake zones, which I was talking about, are much larger than wellhead protection zones. If you

were taking water out of the Ottawa River, my God, you'd have to protect half of the province of Quebec, because the Ottawa River basin covers millions of hectares in Quebec. As I say, most of the water in my riding is surface water, taken out of lakes and rivers. I've got some diagrams here, but it wouldn't matter, because they couldn't see them anyway.

I'm going to ask the questions that people are asking me. I had to go to a meeting last Friday in my riding, and these were some of the questions that were being asked of me and also some of the statements made by the Environmental Farm Coalition. They want some of those answers. They've said it's very hard for them to establish a business case about whether this bill is good or bad, because there is nothing in the bill they can actually put their teeth into so they can determine what the net effect of that section is going to be with regard to cost or anything else.

In the province of Manitoba—I was speaking about that earlier—they actually have a stewardship fund to assist impacted landowners. If you're conducting, for the sake of argument, we'll say, an agricultural activity on land in this province, and under this bill, for whatever reason, it was determined—and we can't say it will or it won't, but we certainly can't say it won't, and that is the important distinction here—that that was no longer a permissible activity, you will not be compensated. You will not be compensated. So you could have your livelihood swept away by a stroke of the minister's pen when this bill becomes law by bureaucrats and government.

**Mr. McNeely:** Fearmongering.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Well, is it the truth? Is it wrong? Could it happen or could it not happen? Can you say categorically it could not? You can't say that. You absolutely cannot say that say that because the possibility exists.

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**Mr. Levac:** Can you say it will?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** No, I can't say it will. I absolutely cannot say it will. But you know that I can't say a lot of things categorically and absolutely with regards to natural disasters or anything else. I can't say that when I step out of this building, if there's a thunderstorm going on, I'm going to be struck by lightning. Chances are pretty darn slim, but I can't say it won't happen either. And you can't either.

That is the important distinction here, because they will give no real, genuine, concrete written assurances as to what people can expect in the future under this legislation with regards to protection of the activity that they currently conduct on their land, be it agricultural, commercial or whatever. You can shut down anybody doing anything in this province.

**Mr. Levac:** So let's do nothing.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** And you say, "Let's not do anything." There was a report that came out last Friday. It was on the news. They did an evaluation of Ontario's drinking water. Do you know what they said? Ontario's



drinking water is excellent. They didn't say it was pretty good. They didn't say it was okay. They didn't even say it was very good. They said it was excellent. So you want to download to municipalities and landowners, up to \$7 billion is the estimate, to make excellent excellent.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It already is. It's not going to cost \$7 billion.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Exactly, but there are no assurances. Can they have an assurance that you will not go in and shut down the activity that they're currently making a living on on that land? Can you assure them?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Then if you're not going to shut it down, why are you not offering compensation?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Well, you can't have your cake and eat it too. If you're so sure that it won't be shut down, then offer compensation if it is. Offer compensation if it is and cover the costs of implementing this report, as you did in the key part of your—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Perth—Middlesex, come to order.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** —election promise, that you would implement all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations in the Walkerton report, principally being—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** So did your party.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Do you know what? Do you want us to do your work for you? We're in opposition now. You guys are the government. Don't ask us to do your work. For goodness' sake, now they ask us to write bills for them. For God's sake, you guys have to take some responsibility. When you get the drivers and the big offices, you've got to take the responsibility. Don't keep coming over and asking me to write a better bill for you. That's your job.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Committee, absolutely. But don't ask us to write legislation for you. Please, you've got to take your responsibility seriously. If you want to be the government, you've got to accept the tough sledding along with that chauffeur-driven car you've got there.

I can't believe it, but my time is running out here. It is very, very important that this bill get to committee and that we have a chance for a full and wholesome discussion on all of the aspects of this bill. I'm prepared to travel throughout this province to get to the bottom of this so that when this bill is finally passed—we know that it will be passed; it will have second reading before we rise for the summer—it is something that is protective of the water source but is not Orwellian in the way that it treats private landowners.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. If they haven't been asked or answered already, we'll now go to questions and comments.

**Ms. Horwath:** I'm wondering if there was some play on words with the word "Orwellian"; we're talking about water, wells. Nonetheless, it's always a very entertaining

time in the House, listening to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Although I know he has dealt mostly with the issues from the environmental farm coalition, I think it was a responsible thing for him to do. Obviously he has met with that group and they have a number of concerns.

There are some overarching concerns that many stakeholders have with the bill, and he has raised them in the context of the environmental farm coalition. Those are the issues about lack of definition that exists in the bill, loose ends that are still not tied up in the current bill, and the need definitely to get to committee. That's something we certainly agree upon, because there are some pieces to this bill that need further scrutiny and need further defining and refining.

The member talked about the cost to municipalities and particularly concerns about costs to landowners and farmers. I come from a municipality that consists of a great deal of farmland, so not only do I understand that concerns come from those farmers but that often the municipalities that contain some of those farmlands will have similar concerns and problems around cost of implementation. My own municipality is going through a number of upgrades to our water and waste water systems, and the member talked a little about the impact in terms of costs for upgrades on the municipal sector.

I look forward to the bill being further refined in terms of its commitment to partnering with implementers, whether they be conservation authorities, municipalities or landowners, around our joint responsibility for stewardship of our source waters in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I'm very pleased to enter into the debate. I think we all have to take a moment to pause and remember that all three parties in this House campaigned on implementing the Walkerton report. They did not say, "If we don't win the election, we'll change our mind, flip-flop, and decide we're not going to go do it." We all agreed in public that we were going to support and implement Walkerton. So this is not about whether we should do this, it's about how we do it.

I say to the member opposite, it is important that we temper our rhetoric. Sir, if you have some report that shows that the cost of implementing this bill is \$7 billion, I'd like you to send it over here, because I'd like to see the source. The conservation authorities have come to us, and we have fully funded, uploaded the entire cost, to get to the root of the science that is the underpinning of this bill. First we do the science, then we do the consultation. Yes, there will be hardship. We've recognized that and we're prepared to play our role as government.

When I was talking to the provincial nutrient management advisory committee and to the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, they told me quite clearly that they had had to deal with the Nutrient Management Act brought in by the previous government, where they had been given assurance after assurance after assurance that it would be based on science and that there would be cost-sharing. They told us about the challenge they had



with reg. 170—and the amount of time our government has had to take to fix reg. 170, which I appreciate that you've acknowledged, and what we've had to do on nutrient management is why there's some concern.

But this debate and the amendments, which we look forward to, will be based not on rhetoric but on the facts. I'm sure the member will share those facts he has with our side of the House. Send them over.

**Mrs. Munro:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. One of the cornerstones of the argument he presented is the fundamental problem of signing a blank cheque, the fact that there are all these administrative ideas put forward in this bill but no corresponding recognition of the cost. I think all members have made reference to the fact that we accept, individually and collectively, the importance of clean water. That isn't the issue of the debate here at all. It's the question of how we bring that about in our communities in a way that, frankly, people can afford. It's only when you see a legislative framework such as this come forward, with no attachments with regard to financial support, that within the communities we represent is the concern: Who is going to pay for this? How will this be done?

It's really important to take my colleague's comments in the context of the need to provide assurance that people aren't going to be bankrupt, that they're not going to be chased off their piece of property and their homestead or their lifestyle or their way of earning a living. Those are the issues that we are concerned about.

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**Mr. Tabuns:** The comment from the honourable members about the issue of cost is a relevant question. I think the member opposite was quite correct when he said that every party campaigned on its commitment to implementing those recommendations from Justice O'Connor to ensure that never again would we have to deal with the tragedy that we had to deal with in Walkerton.

We are charged with the responsibility, all three parties, of eventually coming forward with something that will be accepted and implemented. So I'm not standing here saying I don't want a bill passed. I want a bill passed that will be effective, that will in fact prevent another Walkerton from happening, and I have no doubt that the honourable members from the opposition feel exactly the same way.

Let's go back to the question of cost. During the 2003 election, now-Premier McGuinty promised that he would be implementing fees for taking water. Former Minister of the Environment Leona Dombrowsky said that "the days of taking water away for free are over." I thought it was a good statement, frankly. And I think if we indeed are going to make this bill go forward, have effect, have impact, then we have to look at the source of funds necessary to implement this bill, and having water-taking fees is an obvious source of revenue for the protection of water itself. Protection of water, protection of the environment, is not free. It requires regulation. It requires

enforcement of those regulations. It requires investment. We should be charging for large-scale water-taking, and we should use those funds to help individuals, businesses and farmers make sure they meet the regulations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I want to thank the members from Hamilton East, Perth–Middlesex, York North and Toronto–Danforth for their contributions and comments on my address.

You know, it's nice that it has gotten quiet. It's really wonderful when you can speak in this House and keep it down a little, because really, that's the way we like to debate things here. When it's a little quieter, I can save my voice for an occasion, maybe tomorrow, when I've got to sing or something.

The member for Perth–Middlesex was being very diplomatic in his assurances about how "We're going to work to get this thing right" and "We're going to discuss this in committee" and that kind of thing. Those are wonderful words, but the people out there need these assurances in writing and they need to be assured that those costs are not going to bankrupt them. There are so many activities that take place in this province that could come under the wicked old hand of government and just get squashed and mashed away by the power of the bureaucracy because some official has decided that's no longer a permissible activity. So you have to be there with the money too. I understand the positions of the three parties, but good Lord, we've heard enough about Liberal promises in this House. I don't think people take those things seriously at all anymore.

But if we can get some real, genuine, fulsome hearings across this province, get some explanation as to what this bill means and some sharing of the liability and the costs, we may be getting somewhere. However, at the same time, the rights of landowners have to be respected.

At the end of the day, there is no way that any government should be able to pass legislation and then download all of the responsibility for that legislation onto others.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Horwath:** I'm going to ask the members opposite to be not quite as loud as they were with the previous member, because I have a bit of a head cold and it's difficult for me to project at this evening's debate on Bill 43, the Clean Water Act.

I want to start out by acknowledging that of course everybody here has an interest in making sure that our source waters are protected in the province of Ontario. In that vein, it's quite clear that New Democrats look forward to the time when we can see legislation implemented. It's long overdue. I think everybody would agree that this legislation has rightfully found its time here. It probably could have been a little bit sooner, but nonetheless it's here and we need to do everything we can as responsible legislators to make sure that, at the end of the process, we have a bill that is going to do what we all want it to do in regard to source water protection.



People may know that the draft bill was posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights in June 2004. At that time, the minister thought the legislation would come by the end of that year. We know that didn't happen, and it's unfortunate, but it is here now. It's here for us to deal with. It's here for us to debate and discuss and, hopefully, it's here for us to improve upon through the process of the committee hearings, which we expect will be coming at some point in time.

Notwithstanding some of the silliness that goes on in this House, especially in the evening sessions, I'm heartened by hearing some of the comments of the Liberal members who are acknowledging that of course amendments are likely, amendments are expected. There are lots of stakeholders involved in this legislation, lots of people who have something to say about it. Lots of scientists have been involved, certainly, but lots of regular people also want to have something to say, are going to have something to say, want to have the opportunity to do so at the committee stage.

New Democrats look forward to that. We have all confidence in our lead critic on this file, the member from Toronto-Danforth. We all heard the last quarter or so of his leadoff speech on this bill earlier this evening. I am going to reflect on his comments in my own comments tonight, because I think he did an excellent job of reviewing not only the body of the bill and the pieces in there that we think need some attention, but also some of the things happening in Ontario right now that are of concern, that people who are concerned about the protection of our drinking water in Ontario have raised alarm bells about. I'll be discussing some of those as well.

I think it's appropriate to quote Justice Dennis O'Connor when he introduced the idea that source water protection plans need to be developed for all watersheds in Ontario. In describing watersheds, he said they are "an ecologically practical unit for managing water ... the level at which impacts to water resources are integrated and individual impacts that might not be significant in and of themselves combine to create cumulative stresses that may become evident...."

What we need to do, and what this bill I think is hoping to do, is to deal with the accumulation of various variables, various issues, various pieces that impact our source waters within various watersheds across the province. We want to make sure we don't face another tragedy like the one that every member so far, in debating this bill, has recalled, and that was the Walkerton tragedy that took place in May 2000.

It is incumbent upon us to make sure that the legislation we put place in to prevent those kind of things from happening again, that kind of tragedy, that horror that the people of Walkerton faced, has to be strong. It has to be very clear and people need to understand it and their role in it. People need to understand that it is being taken care of, that it is being looked after by their government. But people also need to know that their government, in taking care of these issues in terms of this clear and strong legislation, is also committed to providing the funding necessary to implement the legislation.

I know this issue has come up already; we've talked about it a couple of times this evening. I know the previous debater on this bill, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, was talking about concerns about the cost to municipalities and the cost to individual landowners. We see a real opportunity here that needs to be addressed; we see a real commitment that the Liberals made. Now is the time to translate that commitment into action. That was the commitment around charging fees for water-taking in the province of Ontario.

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It seems so simple a solution. On the one hand, you have legislation that is so important, that is so vital, that is so absolutely necessary, and that's going to have costs incurred to be able to make sure it's effective. On the other hand, you have sometimes huge corporations that are simply sucking water out of our water systems and selling it for a profit—again, not to say that there's anything wrong with a profit, but holy smokes. Let's put some fees on that water, whether it's being used in the production of beverages or whether it's being used in the production of drywall, for example. There are all kinds of different uses where there's large-scale taking of water from our water sources in the province of Ontario. Let's take the opportunity now to put water-taking fees in place, and then use those dollars to fund the rest of the implementation, if you will, of the new regulations and new requirements under this bill. It seems almost too simple a solution to be undertaken, but we remain hopeful, not only that that promise will not remain a broken one but that Bill 43 will be the opportunity for the government to make good on that promise. So we await that amendment during the process of the committee hearings.

There are a number of other amendments that we are going to be seeking at the committee stage to strengthen the Clean Water Act, because we really want to make sure that we have a high degree of integrated protection. We really are encumbered by the necessity to make sure that human health is protected to its absolute maximum.

I know that earlier this evening the member from Toronto-Danforth spent some time talking about the big pipe, and I'm not going to repeat that yet again. But that's certainly one example of where the legislation in Bill 43 is going forward against the backdrop of some of these other huge decisions this government is making that are so incongruent. How can you on the one hand say you're committed to source water protection and then go ahead with some of these plans like the big pipe? It boggles the mind. I know that's been raised.

I want to raise another one, and I think it might have actually been raised as well: the north Leslie issue. It doesn't stop at the big pipe. The government's decision to allow the north Leslie lands to be paved over with 7,800 houses, on top of commercial and industrial developments, so that a new urban sprawl community the size of Stouffville can be built in the Oak Ridges moraine and the Rouge River headwaters wetland complex is unfathomable. The north Leslie development is being fought by environmental groups at the OMB.



We talked about science earlier. One of the members on the opposite side, on the Liberal benches, was saying, "This is all about science." Well, how can we talk about science in regard to this bill and not look at the science that's happening in terms of the north Leslie development? Even the government's own scientists have stated that the majority of the site is too environmentally sensitive to develop, and contains the provincially threatened redbellied turtle as well as a regionally significant wildlife colony. That's the kind of science that raises the ire of environmentalists, when they watch the government ignore that science and continue on plowing the bulldozers through the Oak Ridges moraine. External experts and government scientists have all testified that the north Leslie lands should not be paved. But has the McGuinty government acted to protect those lands? Absolutely not. Instead, they're standing by while environmental groups attempt, on their meagre budgets, to defend these important pieces of land.

Another example is Waste Management and site 41. This is an issue that has come up a couple of times this very week in question period, around the commitment of this Liberal government to its campaign promises on waste diversion. It's unfortunate that this government doesn't see the connection between fulfilling those commitments, keeping those promises on waste diversion, and the result if they don't. Of course, the result if they don't is more pressure on expansion of landfill sites.

We have a pretty major one—we've had several of them in Hamilton. We have some closed landfills. We have some open landfills that are working right now. And I can tell you there's no end of misery experienced by the residents up around the Glanbrook landfill in Hamilton, because people are concerned—and rightly so. Landfills create leachate. Leachate seeps out into the ground and can contaminate groundwater. It's quite obvious that it's a problem. The way to prevent landfills from growing or the need for more landfills is of course to divert more waste away from the landfills, but unfortunately, the McGuinty Liberals have decided they are not committed anymore to divert 60% of waste out of Ontario landfills by 2008.

Their failure on this is felt by citizens who are concerned around the proposed site 41, around the Napanee area, including the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, who are facing the expansion of Waste Management's Richmond landfill. They know how Hamilton or Glanbrook residents feel. It's the same. They feel very concerned about the effect of landfills on the water quality of adjacent communities. Nonetheless, I think it's clear that the diversion of waste is going to have a significant impact on our ability to reduce our reliance on landfills and therefore reduce the risk to neighbouring communities, whether that's site 41 in Simcoe county, whether that's expansion of a place like the Glanbrook landfill site or any other landfills, for that matter, in the province of Ontario—the Richmond landfill expansion, and there are many, many others.

Another issue we are concerned about that's incongruent with the stated direction that this government is

putting forward in Bill 43 is the Milton quarry expansion. Again, quarries are something that are problematic. I know in my own community we have problems with pressure of quarries that are wishing to expand further and further their reaches in their production. But the bottom line is that the one I wanted to raise this evening is the Dufferin Aggregate's quarry in Milton. This quarry operates within the Niagara Escarpment, is currently part of the greenbelt and lies within a significant headwaters region that includes several tributaries of the Sixteen Mile Creek. However, mining is going to take place below the groundwater table, and the quarry expansion itself would create three permanent artificial lakes to the depth of up to a hundred feet.

To prevent these lakes from sucking the surrounding creeks and wetlands dry, the plan is for Dufferin Aggregate to construct an elaborate system of 126 recharge wells—126—that would have to operate in perpetuity, using untried technologies, to be able to prevent these lakes and creeks and wetlands from going completely dry. Now, it seems to me crazy that we would even contemplate having to run recharge wells to maintain water levels in surrounding creeks and wetlands forever—forever. That's not source water protection. That's not source water protection in my mind. And I don't see how anybody could consider that to be source water protection. It looks, however, like there is an opportunity to prevent this environmental tragedy from occurring. We're certainly hopeful that the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Protect Our Water and Environment Resources Power group are going to be able to convince the joint panel that this is wrong-headed and an inappropriate thing to do in this day and age, particularly on the backdrop of the government bringing forward Bill 43.

#### 2020

There are a number of other issues I want to touch on, but before I do, there is a particular one that I recall having come up at my own municipal council, when I spent some time there a couple of years ago, and that was the issue of the spreading of human waste on farmlands. That was a promise that was made in Growing Strong Communities: The Ontario Liberal Plan for Clean, Safe Communities That Work. On page 7, that document, after talking about other issues, goes on to say:

"The best way to ensure clean drinking water is to prevent it from getting polluted," similar to the idea of the landfills. "Source protection is critical. We will pass a law to enhance protection of the lands that surround our vital water sources.

"Incredibly, the Harris-Eves government allows the spreading of untreated human waste on our farmlands. This threatens our drinking water. We will immediately ban the spreading of raw human waste."

This was a quote directly from Growing Strong Communities: The Ontario Liberal Plan for Clean, Safe Communities That Work.

In 2003, the McGuinty Liberals were talking that talk, but to this very day the most incredible thing is that that



practice is still with us. Despite the government's promise to immediately ban the spreading of untreated human waste on our farmlands, today we still have that happening. It's unthinkable. If spreading human waste on farmers' fields threatened our drinking water in 2003, when they put together their document that they shopped around to all of Ontario, then it still threatens our drinking water today. If it did so in 2003, it's still doing so today. But, again, the government is more concerned about making those promises during an election than keeping them after they're in office.

For this legislation to be meaningful, the government needs to really get its act together and look at some of these issues, particularly taking immediate action to stop the spreading of human waste on farm fields, so that we can ensure that we have source waters that are protected for the present and for the future.

There are a number of other items that I wanted to raise briefly that likely need to be addressed in the committee stage. However, some of them are of concern and are worth putting on the record. There are a number of definitions of key terms that are left to regulation; for example, "ground water recharge area," "highly vulnerable aquifer," "surface water intake protection zone," "wellhead protection area" and "vulnerable area." All of these terms are left to regulation, and that's a concern to us. As I stated earlier, we want this legislation to be strong and clear. The best way to do that is to define these terms in the legislation. For example, what constitutes a "significant risk" and an "adverse effect" to source waters? That's also left to the regulation stage.

The problem is that failing to define some of these terms in the body of the proposed legislation makes it more difficult for us to assess the full impact of the legislation, and that's selling short the commitment that you've heard around this chamber of a real desire to move forward in a proactive and positive way. If we could put these terms into the legislation, we could have a fuller discussion about what the bill really does in effect.

There are also other issues that the bill doesn't address. I've already raised some of them: the one around the funding and the implementation, the costs of administration, how we're going to put together the source water protection plans and how we're going to resource the committees that are putting the plans together. There are major issues around who's going to be sitting on the committees. We particularly want to make sure not only that First Nations communities are being asked for their expertise in source water protection plans but also, where these plans impact First Nations lands, they need to be very well built into the process. In fact, it needs to be mandatory that there is First Nations representation on these committees. The role of the First Nations and traditional environmental knowledge needs to be recognized in the protection of source waters and the development of source water protection plans.

So there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. I'm sure that at the committee stage the gov-

ernment will be open to any suggestions that make the bill better, because ultimately, it is the protection of our excellent water in Ontario that needs to be of primary concern.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** I'm pleased to follow my colleague from Hamilton East, who has, I thought, in her first few minutes, strung together a very thoughtful series of comments, making a particular effort to draw connections. I think this is all about the connections that we often forget to acknowledge. I was particularly taken with her reference to some of the local situations in the Hamilton area, on which she and I have some past history. I can assure you that, as relates to that particular part of her comments, she certainly knows what she's talking about. So I profoundly appreciated those comments.

I was in Mexico about seven weeks ago for the World Clean Water Conference. It's quite an experience, as you listen to people from the Third World speak about the difficulties with water. We indeed have a lot of blessings up in this country, to be starting at such a very good state, notwithstanding some of the trauma we've had.

One of the things that one of the people said in Mexico was interesting. It was one of the kids who said, "You know why there's no life on other planets—why life's extinct on other planets? Because their scientists were more advanced than ours." I thought that was kind of an interesting comment.

There are risk costs to any action, but obviously those risk costs are far less than the risk of any comfortable inaction. I think that needs to be said, and I think the member from Hamilton East needs to be complimented for her thoughtful, integrated comments.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I respect every time the member from Hamilton East gets up, or indeed the member from Toronto-Danforth, whose hearts and souls are very much dedicated to protecting us from ourselves. We need sometimes to take that to heart. But on this bill, it once again speaks to the "Mother knows best"—I mean, the "Dalton knows best"—kind of scenario.

I think the members, those viewing tonight, should be—I'd like to make a reference, because the debate is that important and that substantive that the member from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, our critic on this file, has done an inordinate amount of work to find reasonable solutions to an important issue which substantively we all agree to. I would refer them—they can call my constituency office. I will give them copies of the Hansard from April 12 as a response to the minister, Ms. Broten, in terms of Bill 43, the Clean Water Act.

If you listen to the stakeholders, everyone here would agree. Let's strip away the ideology and the "I know best" idea. I can say with some confidence that everyone here wants safe, clean drinking water. That would include John Tory. I listened to him weed his way through the resistance of the Dalton McGuinty government to listen to any reasonable solutions—earlier today the debate was on energy; tonight it's on water. What could



be more important to our communal survival, not just in Ontario but indeed in Canada?

What's lacking here are clean principles. I don't say that to be disparaging, because I look in this bill—and I'll be speaking later hopefully, and people should pay attention to this issue.

2030

**Mr. Tabuns:** I too want to compliment my colleague from Hamilton East for her comments this evening. I think she put forward the arguments very clearly. I think she touched on the main points that have to be addressed for this bill to be of use: It has to have clarification on definitions; there have to be items addressing the financing; we have to address issues beyond the bill itself—we have to look at the larger influences on water.

As you, Mr. Speaker, and other members of this House would know, the abuse of the water that we depend on in this province is not a recent phenomenon. In the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s, dumping of toxic waste into water bodies was an all-too-common matter. I'm from Hamilton. I remember one of the inquiries about dumping toxic waste into Hamilton harbour. You may not remember this, Mr. Speaker, but I remember being so struck by the story that came out of a commission of inquiry into something called the magic box.

In Hamilton harbour, at the end of a pier, there was a box that had a big lid, and it went down into the water. Trucks could come in, they could back up to that box, they would lift the lid, and the truck would dump everything it had into the box. The lid would come down, the truck would drive away and another truck would come up. An extraordinary magic box—everything went straight through the bottom of that box into the harbour. We have done some terrible things to the water that we depend on. In Walkerton, the chickens came home to roost. No one wants them to come home to roost again.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tabuns:** We never want them to come home again.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Durham, come to order.

**Mr. Tabuns:** We have to protect the people in this province. We have to make sure that the bill that is before us is one that can actually protect the health and well-being of people in society, and that will mean changes along the lines that the member from Hamilton East has set forward.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Either I was having trouble with the clock, or the clock was having trouble. We're back on track.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. I think that was a double hit of two minutes there. I was watching the clock myself.

I'm very pleased to hear some of the positive comments about this legislation, because it's so important. Part of my work life was with constructed wetlands, which have been proven to clean up surface water. One

of the ones we designed is at Alfred College of Guelph University, that presently treats some of the sewage from Alfred. We were at a place called Minot, North Dakota, where they use wetlands for a town of 40,000. Their outlet goes into the Souris River, which is an international river; it comes through Canada. They were meeting the water quality requirements there.

So there's a lot we have to learn about how water is cleaned and how water is protected. I think we have great organizations through the conservation groups in this province who know it and what's happening at the conservation level, with good general managers like Del Hallett in the Rideau Valley and Dennis O'Grady in the South Nation River conservation. These people have been working with excellent staff people for many years; they have been interacting with the farmers. We know that the farmers are great stewards of the land. Generally, they have bought into this water quality, very much so, and they're working at the conservation level. So I think the dollars that are going out as part of this overall plan to protect our source waters are just excellent. One of the small things is that I also think we're going to have more knowledge around these large industrial farms, which have caused some major problems in some areas.

I welcome this legislation. I welcome what we're doing: getting the dollars out at the grassroots level. I'm sure we're going to have something that's very workable in protecting the water of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Horwath:** I want to thank the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot, my former regional colleague way back in those days, for his kind words and his acknowledgement of not only our past as colleagues, but our common present and our common future in terms of how we look after our own community. I'm pleased to be able to be with him in that regard.

The member from Durham, again—I think it's interesting. The member from Durham got a bit of a chuckle when he said that we're protecting us from ourselves, but in fact, if you reflect, that is quite a profound statement and one that is exactly what this bill is all about. It was again reflected in the remarks of the member for Toronto–Danforth, who talked about the historical abuse that humans have heaped onto their waterways and into their water systems. In order for us to protect us from ourselves in the future, we certainly need legislation like Bill 43. Again, the member for Toronto–Danforth in his remarks reiterated the fact that we need the legislation to be strong and clear in terms of its definitions and language. We need to make sure it is funded. In other words, we need to make sure we implement things like water-taking fees to make sure that we can find ways to appropriately fund the plans and the implementation of the plans.

Finally, the comments from the member for Ottawa–Orléans: He not only talked about his own personal experience in terms of wetlands development systems, but also took the time to talk about some of the



leadership that he's very proud of in his own community from a perspective of conservation authorities.

If I can just end by saying this: Partnership is not just provincial and environmental. Every single one of us needs to take responsibility for doing the right thing on this file. I look forward to the committee hearings when I'm sure that's going to happen.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to make a few remarks this evening on Bill 43, the Clean Water Act.

I recall, as a little guy growing up in the city of Peterborough—many of you in this Legislature may know Peterborough. Right downtown is the site of the Holiday Inn. But when I was growing up, that was a Canada Packers slaughterhouse, right in the middle of Peterborough. I was about six or seven years old. After they would bring all the hogs and cattle in, they would do the slaughter at that Canada Packers packing house, and all the remains were put into Little Lake and ultimately into the Otonabee River. Many kids like myself—and maybe the member for Durham will remember—after swimming in Little Lake or the Otonabee River, suffered from earaches and throat infections, and everybody wondered where that was coming from. Indeed, it was the contamination of the water from the slaughterhouse activity by the Canada Packers operation, which was the largest packing house in those days in east-central Ontario.

That's why Bill 43 is so important. We want to bring forward legislation to protect groundwater and source water in the province of Ontario.

Just last Friday and Saturday, I had the pleasure of hosting the Minister of the Environment in the riding of Peterborough, and on Saturday she announced the funding for the well awareness program. The well awareness program is a program that allows such agencies as the Peterborough Green-Up to go around and test wells in the riding of Peterborough. One of the reasons that program is so important is because the maintenance of wells to provide clean drinking water to individual residents is so vitally important. So that program, through the Ministry of the Environment, makes people very conscious that wells need to be maintained. Further, on Saturday, the minister opened up the Green Expo in Peterborough, an opportunity to see technologies that are dealing with a whole variety of environmental issues.

I'd like to use most of my time tonight to talk about the enhanced roles of municipalities and conservation authorities in source water protection under the proposed Clean Water Act. Mr. Speaker, you would know, being the former mayor of Leamington, how important conservation authorities are to deal with planning and mapping of source water in individual municipalities. It was always sad that the previous government for eight years did that to many conservation authorities across the province: They stripped them of their funding. They re-oriented them to be an organization that was involved in fee for service. It got them away from their original mandate of planning and looking at the protection of

water in individual municipalities across the province. That was part of their downloading exercise. Conservation authorities across the province, without a sustained amount of revenue, had to lay off many of their experts in fields of planning and water source protection. This government, our government, is renewing dollars back into conservation authorities to enhance their capacity, and I think that's crucial.

**2040**

Currently, as members are aware, municipalities have the lion's share of the responsibility of providing drinking water to their residents. About 80% of us get our drinking water from municipal water treatment systems. Municipalities are responsible for drinking water supply and infrastructure, and none of this would change under Bill 43. In fact, the proposed legislation would enhance the control that local municipalities have over their water supplies. In the past, water protection measures adhered to municipal boundaries, but today, as we know, that's not a sound scientific basis on which to plan for safety of our drinking water. The fact is, many communities in the province share the same watershed, and effective plans to protect our water resources need to take into account the whole watershed.

Under Bill 43, communities would work together to develop their local source water protection plans. These plans would identify threats to the local water supply, including potential threats from sources outside the municipal boundary. This is something new and important for Ontario and it provides a much more effective basis for long-term planning and getting back to the original roots of conservation authorities in Ontario.

My good friend and colleague the member from Perth-Middlesex, in his remarks to the House, has explained the major goals and objectives of local source water protection planning and the five crucial steps in the proposed planning process. It seems to me that one of the key aspects of this process is the government's commitment to ensure that every local source protection plan is developed co-operatively, with the broad participation of all stakeholders in the community. That includes municipalities, along with businesses, farmers, other property owners, individual citizens, conservation authorities and public health units. It would ensure that all interests are addressed in the plan and that everyone has a say in this process.

As I mentioned earlier, a focus on specific watersheds represents a new element in our thinking about drinking water protection, one that is based on sound scientific principles. Ontario's conservation authorities will be valuable partners in this process and they will help at every stage of the watershed-based source protection planning. Currently, the CAs and municipalities are overseeing valuable research that will tell us how much water we have, the manner in which it replenishes itself, and will identify significant and potential threats to municipal drinking water sources.

As we begin to form local source protection committees, conservation authorities will continue to play a key role by working with different municipalities in-



volved, along with other stakeholders. CAs will also have a role in sharing public information and coordinating the consultation process for local source protection plans. The proposed legislation will build on the work already being undertaken by municipalities to protect their drinking water supplies. It recognizes existing municipal authority in this area.

As my colleagues pointed out earlier, our government recently committed \$67.5 million to support a source protection planning process across the province. Conservation authorities and municipalities across the province are receiving this funding, and it will allow them to do the research needed to make sound science-based decisions about the protection of local water supplies.

I'm convinced that the proposed Clean Water Act is important and very necessary legislation and that it represents a significant step forward in our ability to ensure safe, sustainable clean water for everyone who lives in this great province of Ontario. Our government's first priority is to protect the health of our people, and by supporting Bill 43, all members have an opportunity to help us achieve that important goal.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet Dick Hunter, who is the new general manager of the local conservation authority in Peterborough, the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority. Clearly, he's excited that a government is now putting financial resources back into conservation authorities in Ontario, allowing them to do their planning and allowing them to start to look at source water protection, because they've always perceived that that's one of their key roles in working with their municipal partners.

I'd also like to recognize an old friend of mine, Mr. Paul Crough, who's the current local chairman of ORCA, a man who served with me for a decade at Peterborough city council, and a guy who I've had the opportunity to chat with and who's very much excited that we are going about this renewal of conservation authorities in Ontario.

I think Bill 43 will be a significant piece of legislation for this government, one that will have positive aspects for many years to come. We look at water as a very precious commodity, something that we are going to have to use wisely and appropriately, and I think this legislation goes a long way to meet those goals.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'm surprised that the member from Peterborough didn't have more to say. Quite obviously, the members here would remember the flood in Peterborough, and that all the good work the conservation authorities had done, which was flood control, didn't work. I don't mean to blame anyone, but he was attesting to the great work the conservation authorities had done—and their mandate indeed was flood control. We know, post the flood in 1955 from Hurricane Hazel, that that was the birth and genesis of the conservation authorities. As such, those are comments I would ask him to substantiate in his rebuttal. I look in here, and there's a substantial amount of money, for the right reasons: to map out the aquifers and the various sources of water. I

think the conservation authorities should stay to their principal tasks of doing that, and I would support that.

If you look at the reasoned arguments in this bill, I go back—and this may be repetitive, because these are the only notes I have. But the principle of "Father knows best" is that the Liberals seem to think that they've finally found the magic bullet, the silver bullet. The member from Stratford, or near that area, in his theatrical way, has just raised a book. They have a whole book on it. Most of them are probably complaints or concerns.

As I've said before, we on this side have had a number of very reasoned debates, and later on this evening—hopefully some of the Liberals will stay around, because I have a letter from several constituents who are seriously concerned about the overarching principles. The Liberals think they have the perfect solution, yet this bill is flawed.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Water and its protection is going to shape politics in this province over the next few decades. There's no question that Walkerton shaped the politics of this province. The next step, though, is this legislation before us and whether we make it effective or not. This legislation speaks in a narrow way to the protection of drinking water. But the question of water quality beyond immediate drinking water is one that will have to be dealt with by the government of whichever party runs this province over the next few decades.

It's interesting when you look at China, an extraordinary industrial powerhouse, a country that is trying to grow its economy at an extraordinary rate, and it's beginning to hit up against the limits of available water. Because they have not attended to keeping pollutants out of that water—and I don't just mean sewage; I'm talking about industrial pollutants—they are finding that the ability to actually take water out of rivers and use that for industrial processes is becoming limited. You're beginning to get the conflict between agriculture and industry. In many ways, actually, it's a conflict that we're seeing in Alberta, a conflict between the oil sands industry, which uses huge volumes of water, and the agricultural industry.

**2050**

We here have to have that larger perspective. Protection of drinking water, obviously, is a core part of the mandate of any government that runs this province. But beyond that, we all have to be thinking about that broader issue: How do we protect water in its entirety? Because this resource, as I said in my speech when I first spoke, is going to become increasingly scarce in this province.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I want to thank my good friend the member for Peterborough for entering into this debate on behalf of the government. I thought his comments were well placed, both his personal experience and also his ability to deal with the heart of the bill. But there was previously a comment raised by the member from Hamilton East about the bill itself. We say to the good people of Ontario who are watching, in every piece of legislation, the tools we have in the Legislature are two: legislation and regulation. There has been some debate as



to what should be in legislation and what should be in regulation. I know there's some concern about things being in regulation, but let's look at the pros and cons.

In legislation, we set that framework. We say in the law to all people, "These are the principles upon which we want to base good government in a civil society." This is the framework, and this framework, which has taken many years for us to develop, is some 71 pages long. That is the legislative framework of the bill. But in this place as well, so that we can respond and make sure that pieces of legislation can breathe and adapt, we adopt the form of regulation. Regulation allows bills not to ossify, so that for each and every bill where there's some small change that's required, it does not have to be dragged back into the House. That's why we have regulation.

There's an important need for us to strike that balance. I look forward to dealing with both parties in committee, because we believe that we want to strike the appropriate balance between legislation and regulation. We've had many concerns brought and we look forward to listening to those. We look forward to amendments. I say with pride, unlike the previous government that did not have committee hearings, there's not been a major piece of legislation passed by the McGuinty government that has not gone to committee and been amended and improved in that process when it came back here for third reading debate. We look forward to working with the opposition in that way.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to rise to offer comments on the bill before us, the Clean Water Act. To my colleague from Perth-Middlesex, I appreciated his comments about no significant piece of legislation not having hearings. I'd ask for his assistance tomorrow. Bill 81, a major change to the way our democratic system works—the extension of municipal terms and trustees' terms to four years—is only having two hours of public consultation. There has been no public consultation on that, there has been no debate in the House from the government side, and I'll ask for his help to sever out schedule H from that legislation as a stand-alone bill for consultation.

To the bill at hand, I'll refer my colleagues to the most recent edition of *Better Farming*, April, 2006, courtesy of the OFA. There's an excellent article in here called "Consultation With Farmers Key to Making the Clean Water Act Work." Certainly, in the riding of Erie-Lincoln, farmers in West Lincoln, in neighbouring Binbrook or down on the way of Fort Erie-Port Colborne, are concerned about the impact that this legislation is likely to have unless amended or backed up by significant funds for their operations and their livelihood. It's certainly a common issue that's brought forward by the official opposition to the government. We're pleased to see some progress in the federal budget and we hope that the provincial government, at the very least, matches the initiatives we heard about last night.

But let me read from the article. It says:

"However, several Ontario farm organizations say farms are being made the scapegoat for years of poor

water management. John Kikkert"—who's actually from my riding, lives in West Lincoln—"president of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario"—John's a very wise man—"says farmers will have to pay for costly upgrades to farms and machinery without reimbursement.

"'People close to wellheads, open water and streams will certainly be affected,' he says, adding that farms near municipal wells can expect to feel the brunt of legislation if it is passed."

I hope members will take John's words into consideration.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member from Peterborough has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Leal:** I want to thank my colleagues from Toronto-Danforth, Durham, Perth-Middlesex and Erie-Lincoln. As I said in my remarks, one of the things that I feel is so important in this bill is about rebuilding the capacity for conservation authorities in Ontario. As this House knows, we experienced a devastating flood on July 15, 2004. This government was there to respond to the needs of our community immediately, just hours after the floodwaters hit.

**Interjection:** That's good government.

**Mr. Leal:** That is good government.

It's great that the Minister of Natural Resources is here this evening, because about a week after the flood, he was in Peterborough to provide some emergency financial resources to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority, for them to do some planning. On the day he was there, he talked about how for eight years conservation authorities in this province were stripped of dollars to do their work that is so essential, to do their planning for floodwater management and source water protection. That's a fact. That was part of their down-loading exercise. It's undeniable, what they did to the conservation authorities in Ontario.

We're stopping the downloading, and part of that is renewing conservation authorities in Ontario. That planning aspect of Bill 43, to provide the dollars for conservation authorities to do the planning for source water protection, is a tremendous move forward after the eight long years of neglect by the Tories towards conservation authorities in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I know the member for Peterborough could have gone on for an additional 10 minutes, and it's unfortunate that the chief government whip and the government have been encouraging the backbenchers in recent days and weeks to limit their speeches to about 10 minutes per round. That's been a clear pattern. It would appear that the government wants to ensure that their backbenchers have a bit of an opportunity to participate in these debates, but it seems to be a pattern that the speeches are about 10 minutes in duration.

I know that the member for Peterborough had a lot to say. He gave a very partisan speech criticizing the former government. I can't say that I agreed with everything he said, but I certainly found his speech to be interesting.



I'm pleased to have a chance this evening to participate briefly in this debate on Bill 43. It's a very important bill. I guess I'll start with a quote that was in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* on December 7, 2005, which I believe was two days after the bill was introduced in this House and given first reading. It's a quote from John Steele, who is the Ministry of the Environment spokesperson, I think one of the key media people that the ministry employs to deal with media inquiries. He is quoted in the *Record* as saying that "the legislation is possibly the most complex the ministry has been involved in. It is the result of extensive consultation with municipalities, environmental groups and businesses."

I'm aware that the conservation authorities have been consulted on this. I'm very well acquainted with Peter Krause, who is the chairman of the Grand River Conservation Authority and head of Conservation Ontario. He's done a good job in that capacity for quite a number of years. I am aware that his organization has been consulted extensively. I would assume that AMO has been consulted, and ROMA, although I haven't had an opportunity to check with them to see what level of consultation they were able to engage in with this government. I'm quite sure that individual municipalities have not been fully consulted, even though their organizations may have been.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Here's AMO.

**Mr. Arnott:** Okay, I have information that has been brought to my attention. Apparently this is a quote from AMO, from what I'm told. It says, "Although the resource and financial impacts of the above requirements ... have not been assessed, we anticipate the costs will be substantive due to the creation of a system to review applications, the high qualification requirements and potentially a large number of these positions, undertaking of legal proceedings associated with the issuance of orders, safety concerns of the employees and potentially high insurance rates."

This is a concern that AMO has expressed in response to the first draft of the bill, I would think, from what that says. So clearly AMO still has some concerns, and the consultation process hopefully will continue.

2100

I want to offer a few general comments at the outset of my presentation and then get into the substance of the bill. Many members, during the course of this debate, have expressed their view that protecting our water supply is vital to everyone and that we all want clean drinking water. That's a motherhood statement that I think everyone in this House would endorse. Perhaps where we differ is in how we would go about achieving those goals, but we all hold those goals to be dear.

There are responsibilities of the provincial government that the government must be in a position to respond to in an appropriate way. I'm glad that the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal is in the House today, because I want to express to him my appreciation, on behalf of my constituents, for some of the COMRIF announcements that were gratefully received by some of the municipal

councils in our riding. There were a number of applications from Waterloo-Wellington that unfortunately, even though I had expressed my strong support for them, were not funded. I'm glad there is talk of a third round of COMRIF funding to ensure that those communities—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arnott:** We maybe did, but there's still some outstanding applications. It's still my contention that the provincial government, if it's going to be in a position to share gas tax revenue with municipalities, should be prepared to share gas tax with all municipalities, not just those with transit systems, not just with the cities, because obviously we in rural Ontario have real infrastructure needs related to our transportation network as well.

But I digress, Mr. Speaker, in response to the interjection from the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I do want to return to my basic comments and indicate to this House that in my view this bill represents a response by the government—after almost three years of inaction on this issue, the government has introduced legislation, Bill 43, that provides no basic details, in many cases, passes responsibility to municipalities and farm families to cover the costs and do the work of protecting watersheds, and delays development and implementation of these plans for another five years. I think that has to be brought forward in the context of this debate.

I think it's important as well to point out that when our party was in power, leading up to the election in 2003, when we were in office, we moved forward on the Walkerton report, the recommendations of Justice O'Connor following the tragedy in Walkerton, implementing more than 50 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations through what we brought forward as the Safe Drinking Water Act. I'm told that to date, the number of implemented recommendations, after more than two years of Liberal foot-dragging, only stands at 60, according to the Ministry of the Environment's website.

Another important point that needs to be brought forward in the context of this debate is the fact that Justice O'Connor's report recognized the high cost of water protection improvements and stated, "If the system is ... too expensive, the provincial government should make assistance available to lower the cost per household to a predetermined level." It's my understanding that this legislation completely ignores this advice from Justice O'Connor. Clearly, from my perspective as an MPP representing a rural area largely, but also an urban area, many of my communities are unable to undertake the basic infrastructure improvements they need without the help of the senior levels of government. I have many constituents who are relatively low-income, and many of these constituents reside on rural properties. If the government comes in in any way, shape or form and tells them they have to undertake expensive improvements to ensure that groundwater or source water is going to be protected, they just can't afford it. That's why the provincial government needs to ensure that whatever it



does in this regard is accompanied by a funding program that helps those individuals in those communities meet the needs that we all understand.

I would also inform the House that in my view this legislation proves once again that the McGuinty Liberals have no plan, are incapable of taking any real action.

This Bill 43, as I said earlier and as John Steele, the spokesman for the Ministry of the Environment, said, is one of the most complex bills that the Ministry of the Environment has ever brought forward. This again underlines the need for extensive consultation. I am pleased to learn that the government is prepared to ensure that this bill does go to a standing committee of the Legislature, that there are extensive public hearings. I would hope that those hearings would take place over the summer months when we can have entire days of hearings, when the committee can travel easily, as opposed to having hearings concurrent with the sitting of the Legislature, which of course means that the hearings can only take place from about 3:30 or 3:45 in the afternoon until 6 o'clock in most cases. When the House is in session, those hearings unfortunately always take place here in Toronto at Queen's Park, at least most of the time. On occasion we travel on Fridays but, by and large, if we're going to get out of this building to hear what the public has to say about this issue—and certainly I believe we ought to do that; we have to go to rural Ontario—those hearings should take place over the summer months. I would hope that the government won't arbitrarily constrict the time frame available for those hearings, because I think weeks of hearings are probably going to be necessary on this particular issue.

Part I of the bill states the purpose of the bill is "to protect existing and future sources of drinking water." Again, that's a goal that all of us share and applaud. The bill "also establishes the area of jurisdiction of each conservation authority as a drinking water source protection area. The conservation authorities will act as drinking water source protection authorities in those areas.... Regulations may be made designating drinking water source protection authorities for drinking water source protection areas established in other parts of Ontario."

I'm pleased that my colleague the member for Cambridge has joined us in the Legislature this evening as well, representing Cambridge. The head office of the Grand River Conservation Authority is in his community, and I know he shares the interest that all of the members on this side of the House have on this issue.

As I said before, I had worked with Peter Krause at the Grand River Conservation Authority, and Paul Emerson, who is the general manager. Other conservation authorities that cover our area include the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and Credit Valley Conservation. All of those conservation authorities, in my view, do an excellent job in their area of jurisdiction and they demonstrate a high standard of professionalism. In my working with them over the years, I've come to respect what they do

and obviously work with them to the benefit of our constituents.

I think back to one of the issues that was brought to my attention by the Grand River Conservation Authority at some point between 1999 and 2003—I remember the term of office that that issue came up—and it was the need for repairs to the Conestoga dam, which is an important piece of infrastructure in Waterloo-Wellington. The members who were serving in the House at this time may recall that on a number of occasions, as a member of the government, I raised rather pointed questions in the Legislature and raised it numerous times in members' statements and questions, calling upon the provincial government—a government I sat with, obviously—and directly confronting the government on the need for provincial assistance to help the conservation authority complete the needed repairs to the Conestoga dam.

**Mr. Hudak:** I remember that.

**Mr. Arnott:** You might. I felt it was necessary to bring it forward in a public way. I asked the government to participate in funding the repairs and pay for 50% of the cost of the repairs. After some time, the Minister of Municipal Affairs of the day, Chris Hodgson, ensured that a special assistance grant flowed to the municipality that the dam was in—the township of Mapleton—and that that money in turn was passed over to the conservation authority. It was something that I remember working carefully with the conservation authority on at that time. It was an important issue in terms of drinking water quality and that's why I remind the House of that activity.

The issue of regulations versus legislation was brought up in response to one of the previous speeches tonight. The member for Perth-Middlesex talked about the need for ensuring that the legislation created a broad framework but allowed for, I suppose, minor changes, or relatively minor changes, over the life of this legislation, if it's enacted. The ability of the government to make changes by regulation was something that he endorsed.

I would have to say in response to that, yes, that's true. Bills tend to empower the government to undertake certain changes and responsibilities and allow for changes and modifications, in many cases, to be made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council—or, as we know, regulations, but of course we also know that regulations that are approved by the government tend to be debated and discussed behind closed doors. There is a public process when the regulation is approved by the cabinet—it's made public and people are informed that the regulation has been passed by the cabinet—but of course there is very limited opportunity for public consultation and input unless the government chooses to draft a regulation and publicize it in advance. Quite frankly, in my experience governments don't always do that. Unfortunately, if those decisions are made behind closed doors by the cabinet, the public has no opportunity to hear what was discussed or debated, what the tradeoffs were, perhaps, what the options were. From the perspective of opposition, we are quite concerned about the



latitude the government gives itself in some cases with some of these bills and the regulatory power inherent in them. Obviously, this is one of those bills. If these decisions are being made behind closed doors by the cabinet, if the public doesn't have an opportunity for input, if the public isn't privy to the discussions, the public may be surprised by the result of the regulations that come out. Those are concerns that we would express and would continue to talk about in the Legislature.

**2110**

Part II of the bill talks about:

"The preparation of a drinking water source protection plan begins with the establishment of a drinking water source protection committee by the source protection authority. The source protection committee prepares terms of reference for the preparation of an assessment report and the source protection plan. The terms of reference may be amended by the Minister of the Environment. If the source protection area contains water that flows into the Great Lakes, the terms of reference are deemed to require consideration of certain agreements relating to the Great Lakes to which Canada or Ontario is a party.

"The source protection committee will then prepare an assessment report that will identify all of the watersheds in the source protection area and will set out a water budget for each watershed. It will also identify vulnerable areas within each watershed and drinking water threats associated with those vulnerable areas. Risk assessments would be prepared to identify significant drinking water threats. The assessment report is subject to the approval of a director appointed by the Minister of the Environment. The assessment report must be updated if inaccuracies or omissions are found before the source protection plan is completed. During the period between approval of the assessment report and completion of the source protection plan, the source protection authority must submit reports to the director on measures taken to address significant drinking water threats identified in the assessment report."

This is information coming directly out of the bill, obviously very technical and complicated, but essentially what the government is saying is that this source protection committee will have a great deal of latitude and power. The Minister of the Environment, I gather, will be given the opportunity to appoint these committees and they will be accountable to him. This creates, it would appear, a new power to the Minister of the Environment of the day.

"The source protection committee then prepares the source protection plan," which is a rather logical next step. "The source protection plan will include the most recently approved assessment report. It will also set out policies intended to ensure that every existing activity identified by the assessment report as a ... drinking water threat ceases to be a significant drinking water threat, as well as policies intended to ensure that none of the possible future activities identified by the assessment report as activities that would be drinking water threats

ever become significant drinking water threats. The source protection plan will also designate activities and land uses that should be regulated by part IV of the bill. The source protection plan is subject to the approval of the minister"—again, here we are, more powers for the minister—"after consideration of public comments. The source protection plan takes effect when notice of the minister's approval is published on the environmental registry established under the Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993, or on such later date as is specified in the plan."

We're getting into part II of this bill, and this gives a great deal of information as to how these plans will work, how these committees will work. It's fairly prescriptive, obviously, as to how they'll work. But we come back to the powers of the minister, the ultimate power, I guess, of the minister in this particular section.

I would carry on:

"For source protection areas outside the areas of jurisdiction of conservation authorities, source protection plans may be prepared according to an alternative process. The Minister of the Environment may enter into an agreement with one or more municipalities for the preparation of the source protection plan by the municipalities. Source protection plans prepared in this way are subject to the approval of the Minister of the Environment according to the same kind of approval process as is applicable to other source protection plans.

"A source protection plan may be amended. The amendment process may be initiated by a source protection authority ... or by the Minister of the Environment....

"When the Minister of the Environment approves a source protection plan, he or she is required to specify a date by which a review of the plan must begin. The review procedure is similar to the procedure that applies to the preparation of a source protection plan."

I'm running out of time. I have just under two minutes to go and I've really just gotten started in terms of talking about what's in the explanatory note. There's still much more to go.

Again, this underscores and underlines for us tonight the complexity of the issues that are raised in this bill, certainly the science that has to go into this. Obviously whatever we do can't be governed by politics as much as it has to be governed by science. This again tells us how important these public hearings are going to be so as to ensure that, number one, people in Ontario who are going to be affected and impacted by this bill have an opportunity to express their concerns before the bill is passed into law, so that the committee hearings can take place, the members of the Legislature who are on that committee can listen, hopefully amendments will come forward to ensure that the bill is improved, votes will take place on that amendment, and then of course the bill will be referred back to the House for yet another debate.

But I would come back again, in terms of a final point before my time elapses, to the absolute need for funding assistance for communities and individual landowners who are going to be expected, as a result of this bill, to



undertake significant capital costs so as to comply. If that is not going to be forthcoming, I have to say as the MPP for Waterloo–Wellington that even though this bill seems to be well intentioned in some respects and the goals that the bill outlines are laudable, if the government is not prepared to assist with the costs and the financing of these improvements, this bill will not have my support.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tabuns:** Earlier, the parliamentary assistant spoke to this whole question of regulation and legislative framework and how in fact we should be approaching that. He was concerned about setting things up so that there would be threat of potential ossification of the legislation—

**Mr. O'Toole:** Obfuscation?

**Mr. Tabuns:** Ossification. Two different words.

I understand the logic in that argument. What I have great difficulty with is the fact that some definitions in this legislation go very much to the heart of whether or not this legislation will be effective.

“Groundwater recharge area” has a meaning described by the regulations. Frankly, a groundwater recharge area could be defined extraordinarily narrowly, relatively broadly or quite broadly. Those definitions will shape the effectiveness of this bill. Similarly, “highly vulnerable aquifer.” What is that? Is that an aquifer that is near a major metropolitan area? Is that an aquifer that is in a relatively isolated area? Is that an aquifer that is right inside a large industrial operation? That lack of definition there and in other places is highly problematic for those of us who are trying to determine whether this bill will be of consequence.

There are other definitions in this bill, a wide number of definitions, definitions relating back to other legislation. It isn't as though definitions are not possible, but they're not specified in some very key parts of this legislation. In fact, when you go further into the legislation, they refer back again to these particular items, “vulnerable aquifer,” etc. that have to have definitions in order for you to know whether or not this legislation is going to do what it's supposed to do.

I again would go back to the parliamentary assistant and say, look at the definitions here and bring them forward so we know what we've got on our hands.

2120

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I'm happy to enter the debate again. I want to say to my neighbour and my good friend the member for Waterloo–Wellington, who spoke on behalf of the official opposition: I think, sir, that you really, in a kind of circuitous fashion, made many of our own arguments that we're making on this side of the House, as you actually read the bill.

For example, you quoted Mr. Steele from the MNR—I know his minister may speak briefly—that this was such a landmark and very complex piece of legislation. So, to say that after two years, somehow we were dragging our feet, I want to share with the member the fact that some six months after we formed government, we issued a white paper from the Ministry of the Environment that

dealt with this bill. Some 300 stakeholders were part of that process, as we dealt with the white paper, before we were able to introduce legislation into this House. I would say that we were not dragging our heels; that we were consulting, as we should, as Mr. Steele said, on such a major piece of legislation. Since that time, I can assure you, there has been substantial consultation with so many stakeholders which, again, is why we're looking forward to the committee process.

I know the member also had some reservations in regard to regulations, that somehow these could be done in secret by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, but you also then read in the bill that since this is a Ministry of the Environment bill, all of those regulations must be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights as a draft before they get to this secretive process that you were so concerned about. That was right in exactly what you were talking about, that we think we have that.

I think we have been able to achieve a balance, and I do want to say, with all due respect, that our government has passed some 33 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. I think it's inaccurate to say that you had 55 in your term of office. We're very proud of these 22. I look forward to dealing with the issues of clarity raised by our friends in the third party.

**Mr. Hudak:** I enjoyed the comments from my colleague the member for Waterloo–Wellington, as always. I do remember the member standing up time and time again about the Conestoga dam. I think he chased a few ministers of natural resources down the hall from time to time, being active on behalf of his conservation authority and those who were concerned about the dam. I remember Minister Snobelen, particularly; I think you had a few good conversations with him. I was happy to hear about Minister Hodgson flowing some of the funds.

I do want to continue to add to the comments from my friend from Waterloo–Wellington. It is a good article, and I know some members may have read it. Again, it's *Better Farming*, April 2006. My colleague from Waterloo–Wellington did speak quite a bit about the impact on farmers. I don't know if he used the “downloading” word, but it seems like most of the costs of this bill will be imposed upon the backs of farmers in many of the ridings of members here in the House, many who are speaking.

I'm going to go on now to John Kikkert's comments in this article. Mr. Kikkert said that “proposed legislation may force some farmers to abandon some fields altogether as new minimum distance separation guidelines take effect.” He also mentions that, “Environment Canada reports that the most significant sources of groundwater contamination from agriculture are less significant than from landfills and industrial waste disposal sites.”

Further in the article—of course, Ron Bonnett always has some important and insightful comments: “Ontario Federation of Agriculture president ... says the legislation is too broad and lacks the necessary content to allow farmers an easy transition into new practices.” Here's a



direct quote from Mr. Bonnett: "There needs to be some identification of what is at risk and this needs to be based on science, not on perception." So some important comments that I hope my colleagues will take into consideration, if they have not already read the article.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Mr. Hudak:** He's against the bill.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** No, I think I'm for it. I was glad to hear some of the speeches tonight in regard to the important role of conservation authorities in Ontario, because they've really become very important partners with both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources in carrying out what we call the water budgets that are going on. These are the studies, the plans of the source water protection areas.

What's been very good is that we've been bringing the CAs together, the conservation authorities, and where some of them may be a little small to take care of a large watershed, we've asked them to work together with other conservation authorities. They've been doing that, and through this 100% funding—and I think people need to remember that it's 100% funding that we've been giving to the CAs; last year it was \$27 million from MNR, \$10 million from the Ministry of Energy, a lot of money—they've been able to bring in expertise to their operations, so there's a real technological transfer going on from academia and from consultants to our conservation authority officials. They're doing this work, leading the charge, because they're the people on the local level who really have the feel for this.

I know many of the members around the House tonight in this debate have been naming their own conservation authorities, and I know there's an affection for their local conservation authorities because they work with the community and the municipalities in protecting those watersheds, doing what they can to protect from flooding. Sometimes it doesn't work; Mother Nature, we know, can better us sometimes, and that's always our challenge. But it's good work; it's important work. We've learned from what happened in Walkerton that we have to do this work to ensure that we do have the best water systems in the world. But we've learned from the inquiry that it's not just what happens going into the tap, but it's what gets into the source. We have to protect that source at the very beginning.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Waterloo—Wellington, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Arnott:** I shall take those two minutes, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for Toronto—Danforth, the member for Perth—Middlesex, the member for Erie—Lincoln and the Minister of Natural Resources for their responses to my remarks this evening.

The member for Toronto—Danforth, newly elected to this Legislature, offers an interesting perspective. It's my understanding the member has been affiliated with Greenpeace in the past, obviously an organization that has a great deal of interest in the environment. He talked about some of the regulatory concerns that he has with respect to this bill. I don't always agree with the New Democrats, obviously. In fact, most of the time I disagree with them in terms of their approach to these issues. But at the same time, I would say that the New Democrats have an important perspective to offer on any issue, and certainly the environmental issues are ones that they hold very dear to their hearts, and obviously those perspectives need to be considered in the mix of the discussion.

The member for Perth—Middlesex, my neighbour, my good friend, offered his response as, I think, the parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of the Environment, if I'm not mistaken. That means he inhabits that palatial office in the Ministry of the Environment building up the road that I used to occupy for a short period of time—

**Mr. Hudak:** Palatial?

**Mr. Arnott:** It is palatial. It used to be a minister's office, I think. It's supposed to be a secret, I suppose.

We look forward to his participation in the hearings, because I'm sure he's going to be very busy this summer if indeed the hearings take place the way we suggested.

I want to thank the member for Erie—Lincoln for his compliments and his intervention and for drawing the attention of the House to that article in *Better Farming* magazine. I would certainly commend all members of the House to take a look at that, because I think it's something that's sent to each of our offices, if I'm not mistaken, free of charge. And I'm sure some of the urban members would find it interesting reading, and they would learn a great deal if they read that magazine.

I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for his comments about the professionalism of conservation authorities.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up, and it's getting pretty close to 9:30.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll take that as a hint.

This House is adjourned until 10 of the clock on Thursday morning, May 4.

*The House adjourned at 2127.*

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Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim</b> (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George</b> (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Ottawa-Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto-Danforth	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Sorbara, Greg (L)
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Scarborough-Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

## CONTENTS

Wednesday 3 May 2006

### SECOND READINGS

#### Clean Water Act, 2006, Bill 43,

*Ms. Broten*

Mr. Tabuns .....3545, 3548, 3550  
3555, 3559, 3561, 3566

Ms. Broten..... 3547

Ms. Horwath.....3547, 3554, 3555  
3559

Mr. Wilkinson .....3547, 3554, 3561  
3566

Mr. Levac ..... 3548

Mrs. Mitchell..... 3548, 3551

Mr. O'Toole .....3550, 3558, 3561

Mr. McNeely ..... 3550, 3559

Mrs. Munro ..... 3551, 3555

Mr. Yakabuski..... 3551, 3555

Mr. McMeekin ..... 3558

Mr. Leal..... 3560, 3562

Mr. Hudak ..... 3562, 3566

Mr. Arnott ..... 3562, 3567

Mr. Ramsay ..... 3567

Debate deemed adjourned ..... 3567

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 3 mai 2006

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### Loi de 2006 sur l'eau saine,

projet de loi 43, *M<sup>me</sup> Broten*

Débat présumé ajourné..... 3567





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**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Thursday 4 May 2006**

**Jeudi 4 mai 2006**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

**Président**  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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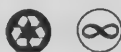
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 mai 2006

*The House met at 1000.*

*Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### EASTERN ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT, 2006

### LOI DE 2006 SUR LE FONDS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corporation / Projet de loi 42, Loi créant la Société de gestion du Fonds de développement économique de l'Est de l'Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Sterling, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** This initiative is an attempt to mirror in some ways the northern Ontario heritage fund, which was set up by the previous government to help municipalities and businesses in the north to attract economic development to their area because they had a special need. They had a special need because there was a lot of population migration out of their areas. In other words, there was a net outflow of population from many communities in the north.

Their median incomes compare very poorly to the average Ontarian's. The municipalities that are trying to maintain a level of service necessary for the population—good drinking water, adequate sewage, an attempt to attract industry to their area—just don't have the resources to do it. So the past government, in its wisdom—and the present government has continued the program of giving \$60 million to the north in various different kinds of grants, either to private concerns or to municipalities to improve their lot.

This bill covers everything east of the region of Durham, save and except for the city of Ottawa. The city of Ottawa is not included in this bill because, quite frankly, their median incomes are quite high in relation to Ontario. The city of Ottawa is growing rapidly, whereas the areas outside of Ottawa are not benefiting to the same degree.

This bill was introduced before as Bill 187. It was passed by the Legislature but was allowed to die on the order paper. Some people have talked in the past about bringing back what was there before. I want to assure members of the Legislature and members of the public that the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp. is not anything like the previous Eastern Ontario Development Corp. The previous Eastern Ontario Development Corp. was primarily a lending corporation, a lender of last resort. This particular corporation is primarily a funding or a grant corporation. It also has much wider ability to make grants to municipalities. The former Eastern Ontario Development Corp. could only give municipalities money or help municipalities with the development of industrial parks. This particular bill and the northern Ontario heritage fund allow the corporation to grant funding to municipalities for all kinds of different projects.

I note most recently that the northern Ontario heritage fund has, for example, helped municipalities: Iroquois Falls airport, for a development business plan; they have helped the city of Kenora with upgrades to their water treatment plant; they have helped the city of Timmins with \$2.5 million to upgrade their drinking water system. A lot of what the northern Ontario heritage fund does is to allow these municipalities with limited assessment bases to upgrade their infrastructure or bring their infrastructure up to scratch. The former development corporations, either the Ontario Development Corp. or the Eastern Ontario Development Corp., did not have that ability. So there is a huge and significant difference between what I am proposing here and what was there in the past.

My bill has become even more urgent today than it was a year and a half or two years ago when I first introduced Bill 187. That's because the manufacturing sector in all of Ontario has faltered, but it has faltered to a greater degree in some of our smaller and rural communities. Take, for example, Smiths Falls. There are two major employers in Smiths Falls. Rideau Regional Centre has 840 employees, and the government is going to close that particular residence in 2009. It's going to be very devastating for Smiths Falls, and there is no plan by this government—or they haven't come up with any money—to assist that particular town to seek other economic alternatives. I suggest to the government that this is a very good tool to meet that kind of problem. Also, in the manufacturing sector, Hershey chocolates, Smiths Falls' second-largest employer or approximate equivalent, has recently lessened their workforce by 50



people. That's a big number—50 jobs—in a town of 9,000 people; it's a significant number. As well, there have been jobs lost in places like Chesterville—the Nestlé plant closed in Chesterville—and there have been losses by Domtar in Cornwall etc. in eastern Ontario.

1010

This general overall decline in manufacturing jobs has had a real impact on the areas that we're talking about here, and we need to come to the assistance of these municipalities who don't have the income levels and who don't have the assessment bases. They're not growing communities; they are, in general, static communities. They just need an extra boost, not only to attract but to be able to maintain their infrastructure to help go forward.

I was glad to support the resolution of Mr. Runciman, the member for Leeds–Grenville, last week to set up an eastern Ontario secretariat, because this area not only needs funding mechanisms; it also needs coordination of the efforts of this government to be able to provide significant help, not only with funding, as I've said, but also with organization etc.

The beauty of Bill 42, the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp., and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. is that both of these organizations would be deciding the priorities for their funding on the basis of local directors. The directors for this funding would come from eastern Ontario, and presumably they would know better than people sitting here in Toronto what priorities are foremost. My bill tries to delineate certain priorities with regard to the choices the corporation would make. They would help those most in need; they would look at the median income of particular areas and help them out.

Lastly, I think that's a fairly simplistic explanation of the bill, and I think that there is significant support from many, many townships. In fact, I have endorsements from over 25 different municipalities for that particular matter.

I think a simple explanation would help most. If you look at the income level, the average income of an individual in Smiths Falls is \$19,500. That's roughly equivalent to what it is in Sault Ste. Marie, which is about \$20,400. Both are far under the median for all of the province. Sault Ste. Marie needs help, but I would argue as well that communities in eastern Ontario like Smiths Falls, like Cornwall, which has a median income of \$18,300, need help as well.

When we look at some of the projects that have been granted to places like Sault Ste. Marie—I applaud the government and the northern heritage fund in giving \$15 million to Sault Ste. Marie on March 31 to build a tourist attraction in the waterfront redevelopment. I think that it is absolutely necessary for the Ontario government to come forward with special help for communities that are struggling, but we cannot confine this to northern Ontario. Eastern Ontario outside of the city of Ottawa has some of the lowest levels of income, the slowest development and, in some cases, negative population growth.

So I urge all members to support this particular bill. It would be a great help to many people who are crying out for it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** I want to say first of all that I and the New Democrats will support this bill, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corporation, and support its introduction by the member from Lanark–Carleton.

He makes a distinction between what was and what he is proposing. I had an opportunity to review what the member from Peterborough had said in last year's debate on this. He articulated what it was, and I think the member from Lanark–Carleton did some justice in explaining the differences. Here's what the old Eastern Ontario Development Corp. did. Its first mandate was to provide incentive loans and term loans to prospective businesses in eastern Ontario. We don't dispute that. Its mandate was to provide loans specifically to small business to start their activity in eastern Ontario. We don't dispute that. The third was to provide venture capital for new ideas for those businesses that wanted to establish in eastern Ontario, give them a leg up. It was a good idea, and we don't dispute that. Another one that the member from Lanark–Carleton identified in the debate was that they also provided loans for pollution control equipment, and we don't dispute that. The EODC would provide to its municipal partners loans for pollution control equipment. This is something that's so important to eastern Ontario: It provided tourism industry loans for new resort facilities. And so on.

The question that was raised was, why would the Conservative government—and you were there—through the former minister, M. Saunderson, decide that it was no longer a very useful corporation to support? It is beyond me, because you, the member from Lanark–Carleton, speak about why it's so important.

**Mr. Sterling:** It's so different.

**Mr. Marchese:** It doesn't matter how different they were. I read out for the record what they did as a way of suggesting to you that what they were doing was very useful and important for eastern Ontario, and that, rather than eliminating its function, if anything, expand its role, which you so easily could have done as a Conservative government, but you decided to eliminate that corporation. I hope you're not proud of having eliminated that corporation and, for eight years thereafter, doing very little to support eastern Ontario.

**Mr. Sterling:** No, no.

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't know how you could nod your head and say that's not true. If eastern Ontario is in trouble today, surely they were in trouble five years ago. Surely they were in trouble seven or eight years ago. Eastern Ontario didn't suffer an economic development problem just recently, for God's sake. Clearly, the problems you're identifying have existed there for quite some time, and I'll speak to that in a moment. But the point is, it's not for lack of will, I suspect, because I presume that most of you would have liked to see this kind of



development going on in eastern Ontario. If it wasn't will, I ask myself, what might it have been? Was it the money?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Well, if it wasn't the money, and you had the will, what other possible explanation might you offer in the next round of debates where you will be speaking to these questions that I ask? If you didn't suffer for lack of will and it wasn't an issue of money, then what could it have been?

My suggestion to you is that it was lack of money and you were trying to cut back rather than add to your cost. The northern Ontario heritage fund cost 60 million bucks. You spoke very positively about it. I do too, and we support it because it does good things. Northern Ontario needs as much help as eastern Ontario municipalities and communities. We want to make sure that jobs, to the extent possible, are protected and created in eastern Ontario. We want to make sure that people don't leave the rural communities and head for the cities in search of jobs, because as soon as you do that, you destroy those rural communities and those smaller communities outside of the city regions. So what you want to do, and I support this, is make sure that you keep those jobs there. Having a fund such as the northern heritage community fund is a good thing.

All I wanted to do by raising the issues that the member from Peterborough had talked about—it was a very useful tool. I argue here today that you should have kept that Eastern Ontario Development Corp., because what it did was important. What you're proposing by way of offering grants is a very useful thing, although when we get to committee, assuming this government will allow it to get to committee, we might have some suggestions about how we offer grants, with what conditions and controls, and not just simply willy-nilly giving away money to those who say, "Here's an idea." I'm assuming the member agrees with that, and we'll see whether he does when we send this to committee, assuming the Liberals support this.

1020

But my point is that you started this Eastern Ontario Development Corp. in 1973 and it continued to 1996. M. Saunderson decided it was no longer useful and then we had nothing at all to replace it.

We know that eastern Ontario continues to experience high unemployment—higher unemployment than much of the rest of the province. The closure of the Domtar mill wiped out 90 well-paying jobs in Cornwall. Those kinds of job losses are serious to these communities. We know that many people who live in the eastern communities that the member from Lanark-Carleton was talking about are seniors and they are getting older. That is generally true, but it is particularly so in many of these communities. We also know that income levels in much of eastern Ontario are lower than in many other parts of Ontario, so that speaks to the need for having an eastern Ontario economic development fund.

I know that many of the Liberal members supported this initiative the last time. Clearly, it was defeated by the

Liberal government; hopefully, it will not be defeated again. I have no doubt that the members of the Liberal Party who are here today are going to support this bill. The question is, will they have the courage, at least those who are here today to speak to it, to speak to the Premier, the ministers and others who are not here to debate the bill? Will they pass on the need to have such a bill passed and support it? Of that, we are not certain.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Who cancelled the EODC, Rosario?

**Mr. Marchese:** I pointed that out two times already. I agree. I've already assigned appropriate blame to the Conservative Party members who were in government and who are here today.

**Mr. Lalonde:** I wasn't here.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree. I have properly attacked the members of the Conservative Party for having cancelled the former Eastern Ontario Development Corp. We're told by some members of the Liberal Party here that they benefited from that corporation, and I agree with that. I think all the Liberals here today should attack the Conservative government for what—

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Attack no more—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Marchese:** Tony Ruprecht, the member from Davenport, is speaking about me attacking them and that I should stop doing that.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** You've done that.

**Mr. Marchese:** I've done that. Oh, I see. I presume that when you get up to speak, you will attack the Conservative members as well. I suspect that if the member from Davenport will stand up to speak today, he will not only attack the Conservatives once, but he will do it twice and three times. Rather than urging me to stop my attacks on them, I would think he would be supportive of my attacks on the former members.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** I know what's coming next.

**Mr. Marchese:** Exactly. No, but also—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Marchese:** —I was attacking the Liberal government and the members for not properly defending this bill. So yes, let's share the blame here and let's review the history, because reviewing history is always important.

That's what I love about the Conservative Party. I find them in opposition oftentimes progressive, and it is a scary thing because you wonder how that could be, having witnessed what they did to Ontario for eight and a half long years, to have them get in the opposition benches and almost forget—this collective amnesia that happens to the members who were here in that government: You wonder how it works. How does it happen? How could you, in opposition, simply say things that you attacked when you were in government a mere two and a half years ago? It puzzles me, I've got to tell you. It makes me feel very odd as a member here to know that when you get into opposition you start doing things that are very radically different. It's a very—

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Maybe you want to share your own record.



**Mr. Marchese:** You're quite right. My own record—and I'm on the record very clearly. I supported public auto insurance and I defended public auto insurance. I was a very vocal member of the NDP in that party saying, "We support public auto insurance." I take pride in admitting that I was a strong supporter of public auto—I don't hide from that. Some Conservative members might hide and other Liberal members might hide from their own record, but I don't hide from that.

I supported us keeping the party policy on Sunday shopping. I was very proud of supporting it as a member of that party. I know that cabinet and the former Premier changed their minds on that, but I don't have any problem saying I supported the idea of keeping Sunday—

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** You're saying you were basically an independent then?

**Mr. Marchese:** I am saying that you should have the courage, as Conservative members, to say, "Yes, I disagreed with my party." If you ever get there, Yakabuski, I hope you'll be able to remember—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Yakabuski.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yakabuski. It's a beautiful Polish name—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It's a lovely name.

**Mr. Marchese:**—and I don't mind repeating it.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Say it again, brother.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yakabuski. I don't mind repeating it. If you ever have an opportunity to get back on that government bench, just remember what you said here. Because when you get there, someone might decide you're not going to go into cabinet, and you're going to have to decide, "Am I going to be quiet? Gee, this is what I said."

**Mr. Yakabuski:** "Quiet" doesn't work very well for me.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know it doesn't work, but when you're there, if you're not in cabinet and you want to get in, you're going to be silent as a puppy, I can guarantee it: silent as a little puppy—or as a big puppy, whatever the case might be. I can guarantee it; yes, indeedly. I've seen it for 16 years. That's the way it works. Anybody who wants to get into those front benches is silent as a puppy until they get in, with minor exceptions. Stockwell was one of them. God bless Stockwell. He was pretty sharp in that regard.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** What happened to you then?

**Mr. Marchese:** Tony Ruprecht, what happened to you is the question. It's not what happened to me; what happened to you?

I say to the Conservative members, I proudly support this bill. I think it's a good bill.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Now you're talking, Rosie. You're back to the right message.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yakabuski, if it's a good bill today, it would have been a good bill under a Conservative government. It would have been such a beautiful thing to have seen the member from Lanark–Carleton introduce this bill while he was a minister or telling another minister or buddy, "Please introduce this thing because

we really need it." Where were they when you needed them? That's the question I want to ask. When you need them, they're not there. They're only good when they get in opposition, because when they're in government they are a complete waste to all of Ontario.

Today I want to see, however, having condemned the Tories as strongly as I can, whether those Liberals who are speaking are going to be able to convince those who are not here that this is a bill they should be supporting. I'm going to be waiting to see whether they can and will do that, because it isn't just good for the Tories, who have introduced this bill, but it will be good for eastern Ontario and it will be good for Liberals. I'm hoping they're going to have the courage to support this bill. Tony Ruprecht, I want to see you speak.

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to stand this morning to speak to Bill 42, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp. As a member from eastern Ontario, as a member from the far east, from Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, I will certainly be supporting this bill, as I did when I stood in my place and supported the member from Lanark–Carleton when he introduced, I believe, Bill 187, if that's the number of the bill. At that time I supported it and spoke strongly in favour of it, spoke strongly in support of the help that's required in eastern Ontario. I stand with a government that has provided many supports in the past, since I arrived here at Queen's Park.

1030

I would like to comment with regard to my good friend from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who is sitting here in the House this morning and was having some dialogue with the member from Trinity–Spadina as the member from Trinity–Spadina was speaking. The member wondered if we would stand in our place and support this bill. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has been a strong proponent and a strong supporter of business in his constituency. Just last Sunday, as I was heading up on the train, I stopped at a store just around the corner from the train station in Cornwall and picked up the Glengarry News. A banner across the front page alluded to the fact that there are some problems with a business in Alexandria. I read the news report, and the work this member is doing for his riding and for that company in Alexandria is commendable. I want to say this morning that, as his neighbour, I think it's important for me to make comment about that.

It is unfortunate that we've lost the Eastern Ontario Development Corp. As we heard, from 1973 to 1996 this was an organization that supported the economic development of eastern Ontario and certainly of my riding. It's unfortunate that it disappeared and wound down operations in 1996 because, as we've seen across Ontario, certainly in eastern Ontario with the loss of jobs related to one-industry town industries—for example, comments were already made about Chesterville: by two members this morning. Yes, it's very sad that we are



losing one industry in the town of Chesterville, Nestlé. It has been a long survivor in that rural municipality in my constituency and has provided great jobs. I've worked with the company, I've worked with the individuals from that industry and I've worked with the municipality to see what could be done. I think that if we had an Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp., if we had something of that mechanism, not only with what we've provided in the past but with that type of organization, we could continue to give help to industries like Nestlé; to industries like St. Lawrence Corp. in Iroquois; which recently announced their closure and have closed, with Gildan in Long Sault. My hometown of Long Sault lost Gildan Activewear. Both members who stood and talked about this this morning talked about Domtar Fine Papers in the city of Cornwall.

I want to set the record straight. We had the debate here on the proposed eastern Ontario secretariat, a bill brought to this House by the member from Leeds-Grenville, I think just last week or the week before, and I spoke in favour of that bill. In debate on that day, it was mentioned that 81 jobs were lost at Domtar, and then today we heard it was 90 jobs. We have to multiply that by at least 10 in the past two years, which is very unfortunate.

I can say that we have a government that stepped forward with opportunities for Domtar, and Domtar didn't take those opportunities. Cogeneration: I met for at least a year on a bimonthly basis with officials from Domtar to try and get something established there because they wanted cogeneration opportunities. We put money on the table. We put opportunities in place for cogeneration. They did not. I remember sitting in this House on the day there were questions being asked by the opposition to the Premier. I remember the Minister of Economic Development and Trade saying—I won't say he was shouting, but he made it very clear that those opportunities were given to that industry and they did not accept those opportunities, which is very unfortunate, because, in my understanding, the dollar was a detriment to them, right, but energy was a problem. We put something in place to help them on that energy front that was not accepted, which is very unfortunate.

I'm going to tell you something else I would like to put on the record today. The member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, who represents that riding at the present time, has been to my riding. The Leader of the Opposition has been to my riding a few times in the past year. I want to make a comment about a speech he gave to a group in Cornwall on January 5 of this year. He said, "It's obvious that the local municipal leadership gets it, that something needs to be done ... the business community gets it; the only people who don't get it are the Liberal governments."

I'm going to tell you that it was very clear on that day that he was not listening to the comments by the mayor of the city of Cornwall, Mayor Phil Poirier. It was just after that, five days later, when the mayor of the city of Cornwall on Oldies 1220 The Jewel, on the morning

show, said he had never seen the province so open to helping out in his city.

I'm going to tell you that as a member I've never seen a government so open to helping out the rural municipalities in my constituency too. I look at the recent announcement of half a million dollars each to South Stormont and South Dundas, to those municipalities, to assist them with their water projects. There are other concerns there and we are addressing those concerns, but that was some support that my government felt was important for those two municipalities.

I look at some of the other supports that have been given to the community: \$5 million to the city of Cornwall, a one-time grant to help with water and sewer improvements; a \$5-million unconditional grant for reconstruction and widening of road lengths from provincial Highway 401 to the international bridge, an absolute necessity to get that done; \$1.2 million for the city's water purification plant.

I look at our hospitals. We have the shovel in the ground in the city of Cornwall for St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre. We will have the shovel in the ground next year for the Winchester hospital. In 2008 we will have the supports to our Cornwall Community Hospital and some smaller projects already pulled out of that to give supports to health care.

We have made strong commitments and strong support to those communities. I can say that an Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp. will certainly go a long way in continuing to support—and the member from Lanark-Carleton commented that this would be grant opportunities. Any opportunities that we have in eastern Ontario for grants, I say, let's support it. That's why I stand in my place today and say I will support and will encourage my members from the government side to support his bill.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** At the outset, I want to make reference to the comments made by the NDP member for Trinity-Spadina, Mr. Marchese, who is an engaging individual and an entertaining and, I think, forceful speaker in this place. It has always intrigued me that, over the past almost three years, when he speaks to initiatives in this House he seems to focus on the past, to focus on the former government, which is, as I say, intriguing and in some respects puzzling.

If you look at his own riding and at the folks who are the government of the day, I'm not sure there is much in terms of political astuteness in continuing to carry those embers of whatever it might be. It seems to be the David Peterson phenomenon, if we read about David Peterson's brother's spiteful comments about Bob Rae. People speculated it was resentment because Mr. Rae led the party that dispatched the Liberals from government back in 1990. I don't know the reason, but it is certainly intriguing.

I want to support the bill put forward by the member for Lanark-Carleton. He is one of two deans of the Legislature, and certainly understands eastern Ontario



and the challenges faced by eastern Ontario as well as anyone in this Assembly.

There was a study done a number of years ago by the federal government that pointed out that pockets of eastern Ontario have the highest levels of poverty in the province. That's not readily apparent to most of us when we're driving on the 401 or the 416 and visiting friends in Cornwall or Ottawa or wherever it might be. But you get out onto some of those country roads and visit with people and you start to appreciate the level of poverty and the despair that many families in this part of the province are facing. That has been exacerbated over the past number of years by the loss of significant manufacturing jobs in the province.

1040

I think most people look at Ottawa for example or they look at Kingston and say, "Well, there can't be real problems in eastern Ontario," but we forget that those communities depend heavily on government jobs and on academia, that those kinds of jobs continue to make those communities prosper, and in some respects they are radically different from other parts of the region which indeed are suffering, and the suffering is growing month after month as we see good-paying jobs leave the region. We've had Chesterville mentioned, and I won't repeat that, but there have certainly been significant job losses in my own community: SCI moving to Mexico and Quebec; Hathaway shirts leaving Prescott; Black and Decker consolidating its operations in the United States. There is a whole list, Mr. Speaker, as long as my arm and yours, in terms of job losses, and they have an especially devastating impact on the smaller communities, where they tend to be either the only employer or by far the major employer in many of those communities.

An area where I believe this bill could assist as well is in terms of the tourism sector. If you look at the Rideau system, the Thousand Islands region, they're significant attractors of tourism dollars. We've seen a dramatic decline—I think you saw the press recently, Mr. Speaker: a 30% decline in US visitors to Ontario over the past couple of years. Part of it is the dollar and the attacks on New York and Washington; there's a whole combination of factors. But we are suffering as a result. This is the sort of thing—if you look at the operation of the heritage fund in northern Ontario, you can provide and incent visitors, you can use those dollars to build tourist attractions, and you can use them to promote specific areas or specific attractions within a region. We see that done fairly well within eastern Ontario.

Farmers' markets: This Liberal government is going to impose significant impediments on the operations of farmers' markets, requiring them to have public washrooms. That's one of the regulations coming down. The government, through this fund, could ensure that those farmers' markets continue to operate and attract people by paying for this. If you're going to impose these kinds of restrictions and regulations, the government should be prepared to come forward with the monies to accomplish that.

I appreciate the opportunity to support the member from Lanark–Carleton. He has done an outstanding job in this place for some 28 years, and I congratulate him on bringing forward this initiative.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to make a few comments on the resolution or bill today from the member for Lanark–Carleton. I tend to support it.

First of all, last Monday, I indeed was in the heart of eastern Ontario, in Gananoque. I attended the funeral for Corporal Randy Payne. I was there because his mother and father and his grandmother reside in my riding. I think, outside of funerals for both of my parents, it was probably the most sombre event I was ever at. Corporal Payne's son, Tristan, who is seven years old, delivered a poem in memory of his dad. For those old enough to remember, it was a flashback to that young child some 43 years ago, in late November 1963, who saluted his father's casket to say goodbye to him. It's an experience I will never, ever forget. Being in Gananoque that day to see all the townsfolk out there lining the city streets with their Canadian flags to salute that hero was a very emotional experience—something I will never forget.

But getting on to the discussion here this morning, I really think there is an opportunity to look at the re-establishment of the Eastern Ontario Development Corp., something that I believe was in place since the early 1980s and, for reasons I'm sure others have articulated, was abandoned during the 1990s.

When you look at some of the economic characteristics in eastern Ontario, there are great resources in eastern Ontario. Many of the communities are home to universities and community colleges. There are two border crossings in eastern Ontario. When you think of the gridlock—Mr. Speaker, you're very familiar with gridlock, coming from the Windsor area—that exists today at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor as the flow of commerce and commercial activities goes between Ontario, Canada, and the United States, it seems to me there's an opportunity perhaps to make better use of those two border crossings in eastern Ontario that don't have the volume of traffic that certainly the Bluewater Bridge has in Sarnia and indeed the Ambassador Bridge has in Windsor. So how can we make that come about?

We can make that come about by the proposal that has been put forward from the member from Lanark–Carleton and others from eastern Ontario, who I believe will support this motion today, to look at perhaps providing some incentive, some mechanism to build up the economic base in eastern Ontario in many of those communities such as Belleville, Kingston, Prescott, Gananoque, Cornwall—real opportunities to take advantage of the fine labour force in those communities, an opportunity to take advantage, as I said previously, of the educational institutions that are in those communities and the ability to shift some of the economic growth.

There are great stories about companies that are doing phenomenally well that have established in eastern Ontario. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke



will know that GE has a facility in Arnprior that's involved in the manufacturing of nuclear fuel bundles that are used in the Candu system, both here and abroad. In Gananoque, Textron Fastening Systems is a company that does a tremendous amount of exporting. There is an opportunity in Kingston, Ontario, with research capacity related to Queen's University. We think of St. Lawrence College and, in my own hometown, Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College.

There is a real opportunity to build on the base that we have in eastern Ontario. It may be that by providing a corporation like the Eastern Ontario Development Corp. to look at incenting business opportunities and entrepreneurial activities in eastern Ontario. I think there's a real opportunity there and I commend the member. I supported his bill the first time he brought it forward on this motion, and I look forward to supporting it again.

1050

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to support the member from Lanark-Carleton on his Bill 42 today. In the words of Yogi Berra, "It's like déjà vu all over again." This bill was passed at second reading during a previous session. The government, even though many of its members supported it—and we do really appreciate that—chose to let this die on the order paper. I think that was regrettable because there's no question that the prima facie case for passage of this bill has been made over and over again. I see the support here, and we do appreciate that. I do hope that these members will make a point of taking this issue to their government, to their cabinet ministers and to the Premier and say, "Look, this bill is important. It is worthwhile. It is necessary for eastern Ontario to show some fairness and equity. We demand, as members of the Liberal caucus, that you pass this." I see the member for Brant there. He understands his bill. It had strong support in this House. Because it was necessary, it was passed by this House even though it was a private member's bill. I was very supportive of that bill and would be again if I had to do it all over again because it was a great bill.

Let's talk about the case. It is so obvious that eastern Ontario lives under different economic circumstances from much of the rest of the province. That is the reason, for example, that the northern Ontario heritage fund was established. We can show evidence that the incomes in eastern Ontario, save the city of Ottawa and possibly Kingston, are even less. For example, in the city of Pembroke the average income is some 13% less than the average income in North Bay and some 12% less than the average income in Sault Ste. Marie, yet those places are subject to receiving monies through the northern Ontario heritage fund. The member from Lanark-Carleton spoke about \$15 million for waterfront revitalizations and things like that in the city of Sault Ste. Marie. Why not in the city of Pembroke, which recently had tremendously terrible news with the announcement that the Smurfit plant would close, throwing 139 people out of work? I was at a meeting last weekend with Cheryl Gallant, the federal member of Parliament, Mayor Ed Jacyno, myself and all the employees of Smurfit, and they're devastated.

But if we had a proper fund in place to recognize the impact of these things on eastern Ontario, they could be mitigated. The mayor has been a fighter for these issues, but Pembroke itself is a city that doesn't have room for growth because of its geographical limitations and is facing economic difficulties because of that, because it can't grow its assessment.

This bill is something that addresses some of those needs. If you look at what has come forward from members from eastern Ontario—myself with Bill 3, the gas tax bill, and recently the member from Leeds-Grenville with his act to establish an eastern Ontario secretariat—it seems there's a common thread here: We are always bringing in private members' bills to try to help and support those people in eastern Ontario who need it so badly, but we need help. We've got the right ideas here but we need help from you people on the government side. Recognize some of those things that the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus has been saying for years under the leadership of Bob Sweet, my warden here in Renfrew county. Recognize some of those issues that they've brought forward to you at different conferences, whether they be AMO, ROMA or whatever. We're struggling in eastern Ontario. We need a separate fund that recognizes the difficulties we're having, but we can't pass that law over here. We actually need you people to do that. I just want to, in the name of fairness and equity—

**Mr. Marchese:** Equity.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Equity; thank you very much, Rosario. In the name of equity, please stand in your place in your caucus next Tuesday morning and tell your people that these things must be passed. Eastern Ontario deserves no less than the rest of the province.

I am always amazed, quite frankly, when we talk about the incomes in eastern Ontario, through counties like Renfrew, Haliburton and the rest of eastern Ontario, at the resourcefulness and the resilience of the people who live there. Even under those kinds of circumstances, the lowest incomes in the province, you know what? They find a way to get by, because they're not quitters. We're proud to represent people like that, but we'd like to give them some hope that there's some fairness on the part of the province of Ontario when it comes to giving them a level playing field, to be able to say, "Yes, we're fighters, but give us a fair chance. Get us into the second round and we'll win by a knockout in the third."

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** I'm pleased to join the debate today on Bill 42 and to support my colleague the member from Lanark-Carleton. He is to be congratulated for his hard work and dedication to the citizens of eastern Ontario. This is the second time this bill has been brought forward, and I was supportive of my colleague the member from Leeds-Grenville in the eastern Ontario secretariat bill he brought forward last week.

The purpose of this is to create a corporation which would invest in the communities in eastern Ontario in an effort to promote economic development in the region.



My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke articulated very well the core values and the strength of the citizens there, and their hard work and determination to prosper, but they need a little bit of assistance. This fund, if established—and we want the Liberal government to pass this act—would create a fund like the northern Ontario heritage fund, and we'd be able to get dollars to invest in public sector and private sector projects.

While pockets of Ontario are experiencing some growth, eastern and northern Ontario are falling way below the provincial average. It begs the question of what opportunities are available for these communities to stimulate growth and attract the new businesses. They can't do it on their own. That's why this bill was put forward today: They need some help.

The members opposite are acutely aware of the need of this type of development initiative in eastern Ontario. In my riding of Haliburton county, the median income is \$17,000. That equates to a 30% difference from the rest of Ontario. That is not their only challenge: In Haliburton county, they have the highest percentage of seniors in the province, translating into a labour force participation rate of 50%. Kawartha Lakes is not far behind at 60%.

I ask this government, how are these communities expected to grow and prosper without our support? The legislation would provide the much-needed economic development support to increase their tax base, increase their revenue and, most importantly, improve their quality of life, and that is what we are elected to do in this Legislature. This type of bill being brought forward today is going to push that forward for the people in eastern Ontario specifically.

The municipalities in Haliburton county are completely behind it. They said that it would have the potential to provide much-needed, additional provincial government investment into eastern Ontario. "It provides a structure and opportunity to flow funds through to eastern Ontario municipalities." From Sylvia Sutherland, who works closely with the Peterborough county part of my riding: "It is long overdue, and I wish you every success." That was the municipalities all supporting this.

Small business is the economic engine that drives the Ontario economy. We want to encourage and promote this entrepreneurial spirit in areas where there is tremendous untapped potential.

Eastern Ontario communities are welcoming and embracing this initiative. They are not just facing their own community-based obstacles to development expansion; they are competing with highly organized and prosperous economic development associations throughout the province. These associations generate long-term strategic plans for their communities, and are designed to anticipate and compensate for declining sectors in their economic base.

As my colleagues have pointed out, manufacturing is declining throughout Ontario. What are these small communities going to do when one of their main sources of employment, like a factory, closes? I know that a lot of the forestry sector had trouble in the Haliburton area of

my riding: Trent Rubber in the Lindsay area and the city of Kawartha Lakes part of my riding have seen closures and lost jobs.

This bill is not just about business and economic development. We want to encourage small, medium and large businesses to thrive across this province, and, more importantly, we want to ensure that these communities remain vibrant and that people can continue to provide a quality of life for their families.

I urge all members in the Legislature today to support this bill and I encourage the government to move quickly on this legislation.

1100

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Sterling, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Sterling:** I'd like to thank all members who spoke on this legislation for their support of the bill.

One element we didn't mention in regard to how difficult a time this part of eastern Ontario is having is related to the agricultural sector. We all know in this Legislature that the agricultural community, the farming community, has had a very, very difficult time over the last three or four years. This impacts on the ability of small-town Ontario to keep up its infrastructure, because if the agricultural community does not have money—and hasn't had money for the past two or three years, primarily because of the beef crisis, but also commodity prices in terms of corn—then the money isn't there to spend in town to keep the infrastructure up, or for the implement dealer to pay his taxes to keep his doors open, and that kind of thing. It has had a devastating impact on many parts of eastern Ontario as well.

Again, there was the mention of the demise of the former Eastern Ontario Development Corp. As a result, I did an analysis on the 37 different grants that the northern Ontario heritage fund has made since January 1 of this year. Under the old mandate, only three of those particular grants could have been made under the former Eastern Ontario Development Corp. So I hope that members of all parties understand that what I am proposing here is very, very different than what we had.

Eastern Ontario communities need an alternate method of keeping up their infrastructure, of creating economic development. This bill will help in an enormous way to not only give funding but to give hope to these communities.

#### TRILLIUM GIFT OF LIFE NETWORK STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE RÉSEAU TRILLIUM POUR LE DON DE VIE

Mr. Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act, the Health Insurance Act and the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le



Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie, la Loi sur l'assurance-santé et le Code de la route.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Lalonde, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I am very proud to rise in the House today to debate my private member's bill, the Trillium Gift of Life Network Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006.

First of all, I would like to thank the Trillium Gift of Life Network for working closely with my office on this bill. Jennifer Tracey and Dr. Frank Markel from Trillium have joined us in the gallery today. Welcome. I would like to thank them for their support of this bill and the tremendous work they do to raise awareness about organ donation.

Thanks to my staff, Pauline Auger and Jacqueline Locke.

As we know, organ donation is a very serious issue in the province of Ontario today. Every three days, a person dies waiting for an organ transplant. While the list for people awaiting an organ has almost doubled in the last 10 years, the number of organ donors has remained low. About 2,000 people are currently waiting for an organ or tissue donation in Ontario. Even though the majority of Ontarians support organ donation, the consent rate remains at only 45%.

I am very troubled by these statistics, and I know my colleagues in the House are troubled as well. This is why I am pleased that we in this Legislature have had the opportunity to help raise awareness about organ donation in this province.

Let me explain a little about Bill 79. The purpose of this bill is to create an enhanced province-wide registry that will be created and maintained by the Trillium Gift of Life Network. The registry will allow family members of potential donors to see that their loved ones had indicated their desire to be a donor.

Le projet de loi modifie la Loi sur le Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie, la Loi sur l'assurance-santé et le Code de la route, et exige qu'une formule de consentement soit remise avec chaque demande ou renouvellement de carte Santé et de permis de conduire d'une personne.

It is my hope that consent forms will eventually be available in all government services offices and MPPs' offices. Upon the death of a consenting donor, the consent is binding and there is full authority for the use of the body as specified, unless the person has expressly withdrawn consent in writing or has orally withdrawn consent in the presence of, and attested to by, two witnesses.

The key to this bill is the registry. Consent information will be entered into the registry and it will be accessible by Trillium Gift of Life Network staff. This is an important change. Ontario does not have registry for organ and tissue donations. Currently, the Ministry of Health maintains a health information database that includes information on organ and tissue donation. When people register for their photo health cards, they are able

to indicate their intent to be a donor. Individuals are also able to indicate their intent to donate by contacting the ministry directly.

However, this database was created in 1995, prior to the introduction of the Trillium Gift of Life Network and contains health information unrelated to organ donation. The Trillium Gift of Life Network does not have access to the Ministry of Health database. This means that filling out a donor card for your wallet or simply agreeing to be a donor when you renew your health card or driver's licence is not enough. Many questions remain unanswered: Who keeps track of this information? Who has access to it? How will your family know your wishes?

This is where the registry comes in. Under Bill 79, Trillium will create and maintain the registry. They will then have access to donor information in order to quickly and easily determine the wishes of the potential donor and discuss the option of organ donation with the family.

D'autres juridictions utilisent des registres semblables avec beaucoup de succès. Aux États-Unis, 36 États ont des registres pour le don des organes.

This week I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. David Fleming, the executive director of Coalition on Donation in Virginia, an organization that promotes organ donation awareness in the United States. Mr. Fleming told me about the success they are having in the States thanks to the organ donor registry. When the family of a potential donor learns that their loved one has registered to be an organ donor, 99% of families agree to go ahead with the donation. This is a fantastic success rate, which shows the difference a registry can make.

L'éducation est ce qu'il y a de plus important à faire pour améliorer le don d'organes en Ontario. En conscientisant le public, nous pourrions, sans aucun doute, réduire les listes d'attente et augmenter les taux de don.

For this reason, I am very pleased to support two other private members' bills on the subject of organ donation that have been brought forward for second reading in the past few weeks. Both Bills 33 and 67 represent important steps in raising awareness and educating people about organ donation. I hope all members of this Legislature will support my bill today for the same reasons. We have an organ donation crisis in Ontario and we must do everything in our power to put an end to this crisis. The creation of an organ and tissue donor registry in Ontario is one more important step in ending this crisis.

I hope all members will support Bill 79. This is an issue that goes beyond party lines. It is about saving the life of the hundreds of Ontarians who are waiting for organ and tissue donation right now.

1110

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I am pleased to participate in this debate. I commend the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell for bringing this bill forward. I participate in this debate gladly because one more time in this Legislature we're able, as members, and as



the public observes these debates—the importance of organ donation is once again highlighted.

I'm convinced that it really is all about education. Surveys show that a high 90%, 95%, 96% of people, when asked if they believe in and support organ donation, say yes. Unfortunately, when it comes to actually making the choice of registering as organ donors, that percentage point is significantly lower, 35% to 45%, and therein lies the problem, and the problem is in the availability of organs. I'm convinced that Ontarians, Canadians, when confronted with this issue and given appropriate information about their ability to give the gift of life, will in fact participate. The bill before us does a great deal, I believe, to moving us in that direction.

The member will know that I have some concerns with the specifics of the bill, and our purpose in this debate is to highlight some of the issues relating to the various pieces of legislation before us. I'm going to express, first of all, my support overall for the bill. I will vote for it, and I trust that my colleagues will as well and that this bill will be passed today.

I do have the following concerns. With regard to the consent provisions, Mr. Lalonde's bill proposes that registration forms, consent forms be made available. Specifically, section 8.0.2 states that these consent forms should accompany every application for or application to renew a health card. It has the same provision for drivers' licences. My concern with this is that I believe we need to go one step further because, even now, we have available the opportunity to register through the licence and provincial health cards.

That is precisely why I brought forward my private member's bill, Bill 67, which I appreciate the member's having expressed his support for as well, that there should be a mandatory requirement for the reference to organ donation to accompany every application for either a driver's licence or health card—application for or renewal. The reason I say "mandatory" is because it's far too easy to ignore this issue. If one isn't prepared to confront it, it's a lot easier to pass by and not complete that consent form. What Bill 67 does is require that for every application form, there are specific questions relating to organ donation, that people are confronted with the issue and that the application will actually be considered incomplete if you don't answer that question.

My bill also respects the right of every individual, and this is where I differ with Mr. Kormos, who has also presented a bill in this House which actually requires someone to state that they don't want to be an organ donor; in other words, there's a presumed consent. I don't believe that in Ontario, in our society, we're ready to take that leap. I really believe that in our multicultural society, people want the right to make that decision themselves. So if I'm going to be an organ donor, I don't want the government to presume that I will; I want to actually state clearly that that is my wish. That's why I don't support Mr. Kormos in the bill that he brought forward. I believe that my Bill 67 still allows that personal decision, the right of choice, but it does require that the answer is given.

I'm not proposing in that bill that you say yes or no; in fact, as Mr. Lalonde knows, on that application form it allows for a yes, a no or an undecided. The reason for the undecided is because, quite frankly, a lot of people will be. For many people, once they're confronted with this, it will be the first time that they are actually confronted with this issue of organ donation. I want to ensure that the trigger of that mandatory declaration is actually a trigger to get more education. I envision that along with that application form would in fact be some educational material about organ donation: what it means; how significant it is; what the implications are; and the lives that we can save by actually giving a positive declaration. Having said that, I know that for many people this is a very emotional issue, a very personal issue, and they will want some time. By allowing for that undecided, but yet triggering the discussion about it, I believe that we'll move many more people into that positive side of declaration. So therein I differ with Mr. Lalonde's bill, because I don't believe it goes far enough. I think we can do better.

I will now move on to the issue of the registry. I concur with and support a central registry. In fact, I was surprised that we didn't have one. Before I started my research on this, and I'm sure before Mr. Lalonde, Mr. Levac and Mr. Kormos started doing their research as well, we had some idea about what organ donation is and some assumptions about what may well be in place in this province. I assumed—and I should have known better, because I've been a member of this Legislature since 1995. I was here as a member of the government when, under the then Minister of Health, Elizabeth Witmer, the Trillium Gift of Life Network was brought to life in this province and became a reality because of the commitment that then-Premier Harris had to ensure that we move the issue of organ donation on to the front burner. But as busy legislators, we don't always get involved with all of the details of the programs that are developed. Somehow I assumed that there would be a central registry and that Trillium Gift of Life would be overseeing that; that when I sign my donor card it in fact goes into a registry; and, if I should die, that somehow there's a trigger of that, and this information would then be available to the hospital so that the health team could deal with my family on this issue. It's not quite that sophisticated yet in Ontario.

We have a very good system; Trillium Gift of Life is doing wonderful work. I have high regard for Dr. Markel and Jennifer Tracey, who have as their mandate to advance the work of Trillium Gift of Life, and we want to do whatever we can to help them. But this issue of the registry is so important because it completes the system; it actually allows the intent of the organ donor to be completed. The more work that we can do to make that an efficient system, I want to support. But I have a problem with the way this bill defines that registry. It's for that reason that I don't support the details of the registry, because I think there are other ways. I would like to leave that open rather than entrench in legislation



what that registry should be. I think it's appropriate that we leave that to a committee, to be developed by professionals within the field, and ensure that if we're going to move in this direction, we've got the absolute best system in the world. That's what I want.

1120

I also have a concern about the identification that would appear on the driver's licence or the health card. Mr. Lalonde provides that there should be an indication on those cards that "I'm an organ donor" or what level of organ donor I am. I don't have a problem personally with that, but I can tell you that in my research over the last couple of years on this issue, there have been people who have said, "Look, I don't want anything to appear on my health card or on my driver's licence that I'm an organ donor or that I'm not an organ donor. I don't want anyone, whether it's a health care professional or anyone else who has access to those cards, to be prejudiced towards me in how I'm dealt with, either at roadside or under any circumstances, because they know that I either am or am not a donor." So I don't support that aspect of it, because I think there is another way that the same issue can be dealt with.

I'll give you example, and that is the registry in British Columbia. I'm not suggesting that that's perfect either, but I think there is something for us to learn there. Under that registry, which is a central registry—here's how that works. There is no indication on any driver's licence or health card that you're a donor, but the minute you sign a consent form, your name and that form is registered with the central registry and it is kept there. In the event of a death, the central registry is contacted, the name then appears and, if the person is a donor, that is immediately referred to the hospital, along with a faxed copy of the actual consent form. There is an automatic trigger of that individual, if they are a donor, that lets the hospital know that that person is a donor, along with the signature on the fax form, which the health team can then use in discussions with the family to confirm the donation. It allows for full privacy, but it also ensures that the hospital and the surgical team are immediately notified.

Those are my critical comments on the bill. That in no way takes away from my support for the bill today or for its intentions. My point is simply that I think there are details that need to be worked out. In the end, we all have the same objective.

I believe that the more we do to help people in this province understand the importance of organ donation—the fact that every one of us has within us the ability to give life is such an important message that when it comes time for implementation of any of the legislation we have in place here, whether it be Mr. Lalonde's bill, mine or Mr. Levac's, there should be no discussion about how it is too time-consuming or doesn't have a priority in legislation in this place. We have lots of legislation, a lot of bills debated here, and yes, it's true that private members' bills seldom see the light of day. But I think we have here before us some private members' bills that deal with such a practical issue that can make such a profound

difference in people's lives that these bills deserve the support of this House and deserve the support of the government.

Quite frankly, I don't care if my bill goes forward under my name. I do believe it is a sound principle and that it should be done. If the Minister of Health prefers to take that principle on and incorporate it into a government bill, that's fine with me. In fact, I would applaud him and applaud the government if that took place. I'm simply saying, and I agree with Mr. Lalonde's comment, that this is not about partisan politics and it is not about playing a political game; this is about a serious issue that I believe all members of the House should support. I certainly do, and I look forward to lives being saved as result of the debates that have taken place on this important issue.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** Good morning. It's impressive to me that members in this House have taken on the responsibility of addressing this social issue, this medical issue. Certainly, the bills before us and the bill we're debating today show an attitude on the part of the legislators in this chamber that is forward-thinking. I can say right now that this is a bill I will support. I personally feel that we could go further than this bill, but every step we take toward the goal that we all want to see—saving human life, making organ donation far more an accepted part of our culture—I see as a positive step.

I would ask that the sponsor of this bill address the question, when he has an opportunity to speak again, about the section in legislation—I may have misunderstood him, but I don't see that a registry is required to be set up. It's structured so that information is gathered and may be set up. I'd like to understand why a registry is not required. Frankly, if we're going to go to this effort to make sure the information is gathered and made available, why don't we go the next step and require that it be systematically gathered, organized and made available to those who need to make use of it?

The other bill, put forward by Mr. Klees, takes us a step further. It says that in order to get a driver's licence, you have to note whether you are for or against making an organ donation. It strikes me as logical that you should have that step, that requirement that people take a few minutes when they get their licence to make a decision yes or no.

But of all of the bills before us, I have to say that I think the direction set by Mr. Kormos will be the most effective. The reality is that most people in this society support organ donation. When we look at the polling, it's up around 96%. The reality in my life and the lives of millions of people in this province is that they're extraordinarily busy and there's always something else pressing in: They've got to get the kids to the hockey game, they've got to get out and get groceries; they have variety of responsibilities that press on them on a daily basis. So when you come across a question that's not pressing and immediate, one that has to be dealt with right at that moment, then for the most part, it's set aside. I think that the bill assuming consent unless people deny



it makes a lot of sense in terms of the need we face in Ontario.

I understand that there are thousands of people on the waiting list. If we had a far more effective and inclusive system, we could address that unmet need that, as we all know in this House, is leading to untimely death. If we could address that need, we could save more lives in this province.

My colleague in the opposition talked about cultural acceptability and the different religions in this province. But when you go to the Ontario government's website, they have a fact sheet on cultural and religious perspectives on organ and tissue donation. When you go through it, there's no prohibition under Hinduism; Buddhism doesn't have an official position; Sikhism supports a positive stance on organ and tissue donation; Judaism is supportive; Islam strongly believes in the principle of saving human lives, with no prohibition on donation of organs; Episcopalians encourage donation; Greek Orthodox supports donation; Lutherans encourage donation; Presbyterians encourage and promote donation; Catholicism encourages donation. I would say that the reality with religious choice, with cultural inclination, is that there's not unanimity but there's certainly a very strong degree of support for the idea of organ donation. It's there in this culture. The question for us is, how do we move things forward with the support of the population?

I think we can go further than the bill that's before us today, but the bill that's before us does take another step forward, and on that basis I think should be supported by this House. I look forward to the debate on Mr. Levac's bill. We have this initiative from our legislators trying to deal with loss of human life. That's always a commendable exercise on the part of those in this society.

1130

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It's a privilege to have a chance today to join this debate. I don't often take the opportunity, as a minister, to speak in private members' hour. In fact, in the two-and-a-half years or so that I've had the privilege of being the Minister of Health, there are only two occasions, I believe, where I've done so. Both of those occasions were on this very same issue. I want to applaud the tone that has been brought forward by members on all sides of the House today. I believe that the issue of doing a better job for our Ontarians on the issue of organ and tissue donation is one of those things that has the potential to be a unifying factor among parties.

The reason I come today in support of the work of my friend and colleague Jean-Marc Lalonde on Bill 79 is because I believe we have an opportunity in Ontario to make dramatic improvement in this area. We don't just have an opportunity, though; I'd say we have an obligation. The obligation is a solemn one, reflecting the reality that has already been well expressed in this debate, that too many of our Ontarians, people we love, who are our friends and neighbours, are very much in need of policy enhancement.

I want to compliment, on the point of policy enhancement, some that has already been done, acknowledging that we've worked hard as a government to give more life to the work of the Trillium Gift of Life Network. Representatives from the Trillium Gift of Life Network are here today in the galleries. But way more important than that, they're here today as a signal and a symbol of their engagement on this issue.

We've made some progress, as I said, even in the first quarter of this calendar year, the last quarter of the government's year. We saw a 19% increase in our capacity to give appropriate, real life and meaning to the gift of life through our routine notification request. In a certain sense it was one element, one rather substantial element, of low-hanging fruit that was available to us to do a better job, by simply creating the capacity for the Trillium Gift of Life to be provided with notice from our highest volume hospitals when an individual had passed on, where that individual's organs or tissues might lend benefit and life to other Ontarians. We've made a substantial improvement. The improvement is most substantial when it is measured on a percentage basis, and we have to be careful not to celebrate so much a success on percentage terms that continues to leave so many of our loved ones, so many of our Ontarians, without all the support they require.

I come today as a member of the government on an issue during private members' hour to send a very strong signal to encourage all members of the legislature to stand on this issue today, and to continue to be united in a desire to see us do a better job. There are four members of the Legislature who have distinguished themselves on this issue. I don't know what it is about having the last letter L or K to lead your name, but Levac, Lalonde, Klees and Kormos, the group of four, if I might call them that, are all making a contribution to a debate that lends us, gives us a sense of hope and opportunity that we don't always manage to achieve around this place.

For our part as a government, and I want to follow up in a certain sense on the tone that was offered by the member from Oak Ridges, we see this very much as non-partisan issue, as one where we can demonstrate to Ontarians that our best work on this file is yet to come. To that point, the government has an obligation to demonstrate its leadership. I had the privilege, I think just a week or so ago, on a day when many had gathered in Toronto, international experts coming to work with our Ontario health care community and the patient community to seek to stimulate the discussion even further, about what are those steps we can take to move Ontario from being a jurisdiction where we can celebrate our progress, but where we most certainly cannot celebrate that we have maximized our opportunity to extend life—this is the responsibility we have. Accordingly, the reason I am in support of each and every one of the bills that comes before this House on the issue of organ and tissue donation is that they are all important contributors to a discussion.

I want to send a message clearly today to legislators and to anyone from Ontario who is attuned to this debate



that some of the private members' bills challenge us in certain ways. Not everyone has the same level of comfort around notions like presumed consent. For my part, I'm on the record to say I support it. I support Mr. Lalonde's initiative, of course, because government has many opportunity points where we can influence the behaviour of Ontarians in a way that can help other Ontarians.

But our obligation is greater than that. I want to remind members of something I had the chance to announce in this House last Thursday, one week ago today, that our government will soon be moving forward with the appointment of what I refer to as an eminent persons panel. We're going to ask Ontarians who, when we show them to Ontarians, will be a group of people who reflect the diversity of our society. We will seek to reach out to people who are distinguished leaders. We believe it's essential that, on an issue like organ and tissue donation, we create the capacity for a community conversation that engages people in their town hall and at the Legion, down at the library and at the community centre, to have the kind of conversation to lay the groundwork for an organ and tissue donation system in Ontario that is a world leader, and that builds on the promise and the hope that is already so evident among all those who have come together on this issue.

The Trillium Gift of Life, the important hospitals that are doing transplant work, the patient groups, the patients themselves and their loved ones, all Ontarians who wish we would extend the very best of a health care system to offer more hope and more opportunity: This is with a promise that we have and the opportunity is there when we all work together.

I want to say to all those members who, like Jean-Marc Lalonde today, have moved forward pieces of legislation, that we should stand and support them all. I assure you that, on the part of our government, these bills will be an important part of the consideration we ask the people of Ontario to be engaged in.

I think that, by this time next year, we should establish for ourselves the goal of moving forward with a piece of legislation, not private members' legislation but a piece of government legislation, that has our common hopes, dreams and aspirations that we would do a better job for those Ontarians, too many of whom now languish on waiting lists that grow too long, that we will have stepped up to the plate and moved Ontario forward in a fashion that other jurisdictions will seek to emulate. This is the goal we should have for our public health care system. We have that capacity in our society.

On behalf of the government, during private members' hour, I stand in support of this legislation. I say to all members of this House and all Ontarians that I believe that in a one-year period of time we can unlock much of this promise, do a much better job for Ontarians and celebrate a community success that will have had important contributions from members on all sides, and I thank them for it.

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I'm delighted to rise today in the House in support of Bill 79, An Act to

amend the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act, the Health Insurance Act and the Highway Traffic Act.

I too had the opportunity last week to attend the Trillium Gift of Life symposium and to hear Dr. Robert Bell and Dr. William Wall from the London Health Sciences Centre, and Dr. Gary Levy from the Toronto General Hospital speak about their experiences and the experience we are all having as Ontarians with respect to donors and transplants.

The Trillium Gift of Life Network officials who are here today in the gallery reminded me that last year we had a record year of donations of transplants in the province, and that is something to celebrate, but we have much work to do. As all members of the House who have spoken to this today have commented, one of the main issues we have deal with is a lack of awareness. We have to raise the awareness. We have to make sure that people know what their opportunities are and how to take care of those opportunities, how to act on those.

This morning, out of interest, I opened my wallet to check and see if I had in my wallet the card I had signed. In fact, I did not have one card; I have four cards. Over time I keep signing them and putting them in my wallet in the hope that whoever happens upon me, should I be felled in an accident, will know that I want to donate.

**1140**

One thing I was not aware of, that I found out at the conference, was that many people who sign cards do not talk to their family members about it; therefore, there's some conflict at the time of death about whether that donation can happen. It's really important that people not only sign their cards today but also talk to their family members, so they know that that's your intention and your wish, and that's what you want moving forward.

Part of this legislation will put in place a registry. It will also put in place acknowledgement of the donor card signature being the consent. That will ensure that, having signed that card, people will know that was my intention and will move forward with that, unless I take further action to take away my consent.

I have no problem with the fact that my consent will be indicated on my health card or my driver's licence. I think it's important that that knowledge be out there. Should I be in an accident, if someone is looking to find out who I am, they'll pull out my driver's licence and know, "This is who she is, and she has agreed to donate. Let's move forward."

I think a registry is vitally important. It's one thing to have people aware of the opportunities, and it's another thing to have them sign their cards and take action. But we also have to have that registry so that the confirmation and knowledge are there.

As a family member of someone who went through a bone marrow transplant, I am only too familiar with the need for a registry. On the bone marrow side, there is a registry. You can be tested through the Canadian blood service and be included on a worldwide registry. It is so vitally important to make sure that a match can be made with someone in need.



There is precedent for this in donors—transplants across other jurisdictions. There's a need for it, and I think that through this legislation and the other private members' bills we have debated, we are raising awareness. We are making sure that people know the opportunity is there, the demand is there, and we are saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity, and I certainly support this legislation and my colleague.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Obviously I stand before us to support my colleague's bill, Bill 79, but I want to bring to the attention of this place the overall debate, as the Minister of Health has done: Three days go by and you know that someone else has died waiting for an organ transplant. That's not acceptable. I said it before when I introduced my bill, Bill 33, the Education Act amendments that would allow us to teach organ donation in all schools in the province. I believe that bill gets in front of the debate to change the culture.

The member from Niagara Centre, the member from Oak Ridges and the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell are introducing bills that are asking us to debate what we know is the right thing to do. I have stood in this place often during private members' time and professed a strong belief that when we speak collectively on the same topic as legislators—I will remove the party acronym and the shackles we are sometimes attached to that tell us we must think as any party does—it offers us the opportunity to speak about issues that are important to us as human beings. This is one of them. This is absolutely raw to who we are as people. We have great scientists out there who have brought us from the 1960s, when the first heart transplant was done, to today, when people are surviving automatically with very few complications and moving on to us, as human beings, the gift of life.

I challenge all of us to remember that this isn't a debate about politics; this isn't a debate about whose bill is better. This is a debate about doing the right thing. I challenge all of us to engage in the debate to ensure that, as human beings, we're doing the right thing. That's a very lofty thing to say, but I think we sometimes forget to do that. Sometimes we forget to have that debate about the impact.

I have met with many organizations on this issue, and we are still scratching the surface of where we're going to be in the future. I commend all those researchers, those people who have used their brains and their passion to bring this forward, and not to discredit those, more importantly to the families on both sides of the issue: those who have gone through the painful process of losing a loved one to understanding the gift they present—and I know; I've spoken to the recipients who have someone else's organ—the utter joy and love they have in their hearts for those that have contributed. That's what we're talking about today, engaging in that conversation.

As I've done in the past and I'll continue to do, I'll reach into my pocket and hold up my wallet. Inside my wallet is my card. More importantly, that signifies to me

that I've had the discussion with my family and they know my wishes.

Sign your donor card. Talk to your families. Let's get this moving. I thank the member for bringing his bill forward.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Lalonde, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Lalonde:** I would like to thank all the members that participated in the debate today: the member from Brant; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the member from Toronto Centre–Rosedale; and the members from Nipissing, Oak Ridges and Toronto–Danforth.

I would also like to acknowledge a very special guest who has joined us today in the gallery: Marie-Josée Lalonde, who is not related to me but she's from Rockland, Ontario. Marie-Josée suffers from Alport's disease, which causes kidney damage. This means she needs a new kidney, and has been on the waiting list for a kidney transplant since 2002.

La condition de Marie-Josée est héréditaire. Sa mère, Lorraine, et son frère, Patrick, souffrent de la même maladie. Patrick a eu la chance de subir une transplantation de reins il y a 12 ans, et sa santé est très bonne aujourd'hui.

I would like to thank Marie-Josée for being here today and allowing me to share her family's story. This family's story is not unique. Hundreds of Ontarians are waiting for organ and tissue donation as we speak.

Last week I attended a conference entitled Organ Donation Crisis in Ontario: Finding Solutions, which was organized by the Trillium Gift of Life Network and the University Health Network. This conference included some of the most prominent doctors in the field of organ transplantation. I raised the issue of a registry during the conference, and doctors were very supportive of a registry for Ontario.

A province-wide registry exclusively for organ and tissue donation is one critical change we can make here in the Legislature which undoubtedly will help improve donation rates in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private members' public business usually takes us until noon. So what we will do at this point is pause till 12 o'clock and then deal with the ballot items.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1148 to 1159.*

#### EASTERN ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LE FOND DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We'll deal first with ballot item number 33, standing in the name of Mr. Sterling.

Mr. Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 42, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corporation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?



All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** I'd like the bill to be referred to the finance and economic affairs committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the bill be referred to the finance and economic affairs committee? Agreed.

# TRILLIUM GIFT OF LIFE NETWORK STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

## LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE RÉSEAU TRILLIUM POUR LE DON DE VIE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall now deal with ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mr. Lalonde.

Mr. Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 79, An Act to amend the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act, the Health Insurance Act and the Highway Traffic Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 79. All those in favour, please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Amott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Barrett, Toby  
Bradley, James J.  
Brownell, Jim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoy, Pat  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc

Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Marchese, Rosario  
Marsales, Judy  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Norm  
Mitchell, Carol  
O'Toole, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parsons, Ernie  
Patten, Richard

Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Tabuns, Peter  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 37; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I request that this bill be sent to the standing committee on social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the bill be sent to the standing committee on social policy? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1208 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TOBACCO GROWERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** Ontario's tobacco crop will shrink by 35% this year as local farming continues to crash. The negotiated target price for the 2006 crop is \$2.327 per pound, and at this price the 2006 crop will generate only \$129 million.

As tobacco board president Fred Neukamm states, "A drop of nearly \$60 million in the value of the tobacco crop is a disaster for our farmers and our communities. This deal only reinforces the need for a universal exit program for our farmers, and detailed negotiations on that package are needed immediately."

The last remaining farmers and their communities in Norfolk, Oxford, Elgin and Brant do need federal and provincial government help to make the transition to a post-tobacco economy. Previously, the federal and provincial governments put up \$120 million in tobacco relief, buying out quotas, encouraging new businesses and crops, but now more help is needed as the industry disappears.

"The crisis for growers is a perfect storm where all negative factors are in alignment," says Brant MPP Dave Levac in today's Brantford Expositor, and I concur with Dave. Tobacco taxes keep rising; Ontario will go smoke-free on May 31; and cigarette makers are importing more foreign, less expensive, tobacco.

The solution is a full exit plan, as in Australia and the United States. There is no turning back.

### MOLSON CANADA

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** Today it's my privilege as the member of provincial Parliament for Etobicoke North to recognize the good work of one of our leading corporate citizens, Molson brewery. Recently, I had the pleasure of participating in the kick-off of the Molson brewery volunteer program. This is an innovative campaign that invites all Molson employees to take a paid day off work to participate in team-based volunteer activity.

On April 21, Molson brewery participated in a community cleanup day in Etobicoke. Several other regional projects will be undertaken by Molson employees across Canada. In fact, the volunteer program broadens the company's commitment to communities all across the land.

With more than 3,100 employees across Canada, the Molson's program has contributed over 25,000 volunteer hours. This is the economic equivalent of more than \$1 million.

I and the Minister of Health Promotion, the Honourable Jim Watson, and indeed all members of this House, would like to congratulate the Molson's team, ably represented in the east gallery today by Judy McClelland, Heidi Pokorny, Kathryn Spraggett, Stacey Ritz, Ali

Cameron, Mary Boynton, Babita Khunkhun, Ashley Basfield and Carole Berry.

You are a credit, Molson, to Canadian business and a great corporate citizen in Etobicoke to partner with. Thank you for helping to better the communities we live in.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I rise in the House today because of concerns over the number of unlicensed drivers on Ontario roads.

In May 2004, Mothers Against Drunk Driving announced the findings of a report on the number of suspended drivers who continue to drive in Ontario. The results were simply shocking. MADD Canada revealed that the number of suspended drivers had increased by 2.4 times in the past five years. MADD Canada estimates—this is important—that up to 75% of Ontario's suspended drivers continue to drive while the minister tinkers.

These outlaw drivers are likely to get into crashes. They lack the insurance to compensate their victims. Mothers Against Drunk Driving issued a report yesterday that compared Ontario's and Saskatchewan's statistics in terms of the number of suspended drivers who continue to drive. This report reveals that only 27% of first-time offenders in Saskatchewan did not follow through by attending the initial session. In Ontario, the non-participating rate was 55%. Andrew Murie, CEO of MADD Canada, has warned, "In Ontario, there's a nightmare scenario where more and more drivers who are losing their licence fail to get properly relicensed."

I urge the government, indeed I urge the minister and the Premier, to take some leadership: the government to act at once to end the nightmare of unlicensed drivers and get them off the roads.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** It's highway robbery. Motorists across Ontario, every time they pull up to a gas pump, are getting mugged and rolled, are getting ripped off and scammed by the price-gouging big oil companies of North America and beyond.

This government, the Dalton McGuinty Liberals, had all the answers, and they promised to control, stabilize and reduce gasoline prices once they got elected. They ran on that during the course of campaigning across Ontario, but when they get elected, what do they deliver? Nothing. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have abandoned drivers here in the province of Ontario, indeed have betrayed them. The Liberals crawl into bed with big oil and its billions and billions of dollars of new profits.

We know it's well within the jurisdiction of the province to regulate gasoline prices. The announcement just this week that Nova Scotia has acquiesced to the demands of the New Democratic Party there to regulate gasoline prices means that Ontario is the only province in

eastern Canada that does not regulate and control gasoline prices.

I say it's about time for the robber barons of the big oil industry to be taken to task and put on a leash. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals would indeed keep one of their promises were they to set up a regulatory regime.

New Democrats are committed to protecting drivers across Ontario from the robber barons of big oil and their price gouging at the pumps. We're committed to recovery from pump shock rather than inflicting more.

#### SULTAN JESSA

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** I rise in the House today to recognize the contributions of Sultan Jessa, an outstanding journalist and decorated booster for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh.

Recently, Mr. Jessa retired from a 33-year career with the Cornwall Standard Freeholder. During those years, Cornwall and area citizens relied on him to tell the stories about their communities, both in the worst of times and the best. Sultan's reporting went beyond basic facts. His editorial work helped our community see the bigger picture.

It is people like Sultan who have given Cornwall and area its reputation for having hard-working, capable and caring citizens.

Settling in Cornwall after his family was forced to leave their native Tanzania, Mr. Jessa's story is one that exemplifies the challenging circumstances many of Ontario's newcomers face. When he arrived in 1973, Sultan experienced a number of frustrating and senseless roadblocks driven by racial prejudice.

Thankfully, we have come a long way since then, and I am proud to be part of a government that welcomes newcomers and recognizes the important contributions they make to our province.

Since settling in Cornwall, Mr. Jessa's achievements have been outstanding. He was named Cornwall's Citizen of the Year in 1979, just six years after his arrival. Most recently, in 2005 he received, with the pride of the community, the Order of Canada. All along the way, he has been continually recognized for his contributions to the community, from service clubs like Rotary International and Big Brothers, to multiculturalism and the arts.

I salute Sultan Jessa, who is watching today at his home, and I wish him the happiest of retirements.

#### FARMERS' MARKETS

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Rural Ontarians have once again found themselves in the crosshairs of the McGuinty government. It disappoints me to have to rise in this House today to provide yet another example of this Liberal government's encroachment upon rural values.



In March of this year, the Ministry of Health secretly distributed a draft report entitled Ontario Farmers' Markets Food Safety Guidelines with the intention of drastically altering the regulations governing Ontario's farmers' markets. This report was compiled without input from municipalities, market managers or the individual vendors who make our farmers' markets the unique fixture Ontarians have enjoyed for generations. One is left to ask, how many other provincial matters are being discussed behind closed doors without input from those most affected?

In fact, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit board has determined that due to the potential negative impacts on the region, they object to the ministry's hasty timelines to ram these new and secretly drafted guidelines through. They have called upon the minister to accept a three-month extension on changes to the current guidelines so that proper consultations and stakeholder input can take place.

I encourage the Minister of Health to listen to this plea and recognize the importance of farmers' markets to the cultural and generational roots of rural and small-town Ontario.

1340

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** Recently the University of Western Ontario announced that they will be offering a university course in Goderich, which will be held at the Goderich museum starting this fall. I can tell you that this is good news for the town of Goderich and the surrounding communities. People in the area will now have an opportunity to take a university course without having to move out of the area or travel long distances each day. This will give students the chance to take a university course who might not have had that chance before. The first-year sociology course that is being offered will provide a head start for most university degrees. This is an exciting new opportunity. This is only the beginning, but it's a step in the right direction and it will strengthen our rural communities.

I want to add my congratulations to the extremely vibrant volunteers who so diligently worked on this program. Congratulations to them for their work and the successful outcome. We look forward to developing further relationships with our universities and colleges to provide post-secondary education in the riding of Huron-Bruce.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I am pleased to rise in my place today to report to the Legislature about a very successful event held in Ottawa last Friday, April 28, at the Ottawa Hospital.

I was honoured to participate in an announcement alongside my colleagues Minister Jim Watson and Minister Madeleine Meilleur. We had the pleasure of informing the people of Ottawa that wait times for medical

procedures in our city are decreasing due to the historic investments this government has made in health care.

The former government left Ottawa and indeed the entire province in terrible shape for health care. In order to address this situation, thanks to Premier McGuinty and Minister Smitherman, our government has made great investments in health care in Ottawa and the Champlain district. Even with higher demands for procedures, wait times for cancer treatment are down 4%; cataract surgery wait times are down 21%; hip replacement wait times are down 19%; and knee replacement wait times are down 17%. These are numbers to be proud of.

In order to expand on these triumphs, we announced on Friday that the McGuinty government is providing even more funding for the Champlain LHIN to help reduce wait times even further for various procedures. The Champlain LHIN received \$2,996,000 for cancer treatment; \$9,854,000 for cardiac treatment; \$6,319,000 for hip and knee replacements; and \$1,100,000 for cataract operations.

Since 2003, we have increased the number of MRIs by 43% and are now adding \$4,361,000 to increase MRI examinations in the city of Ottawa. Ottawa patients no longer have to go to the US or Quebec and pay \$900 for these procedures.

I thank you, Premier McGuinty, and thank you, George Smitherman, for the great progress we are making in health care in Ottawa.

#### PETERBOROUGH ECONOMY

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's my great pleasure to rise in the House today to announce that the Peterborough region has ranked first in the country for per capita retail sales. The Peterborough region was recently identified as the top community in per capita retail sales with a population of over 100,000 people. These results were released in the 2006 Financial Post Markets Canadian Demographics. Edmonton, Alberta, ties with the Peterborough region for total average sales estimates of \$15,100 per capita.

Growth in the region is evident, as retail sales surged by a total of 11% from 2005 to 26% above the national average in 2006. Over the past year, major retailers such as Home Hardware, Shoppers Drug Mart, Rona Cashway and Wal-Mart have recognized the economic opportunities in the region by opening new locations or expanding existing operations. Peterborough continues to grow, and future retailers such as Costco and Loblaws Great Canadian Superstore continue to announce new construction plans in our communities.

I am delighted to join with the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corp. in declaring Peterborough as the number one business region in Ontario.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce some people in

the members' gallery. We have Denis and Jennifer Chamberland and Anne Marie and Elizabeth Chamberland. They're the family of Caroline Chamberland, our page.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to also introduce two proud relatives of our page, Elliott Leeftang. His mom, Helen Leeftang, and his aunt, Mary Brown, have come here from Port Elmsley near Perth. We'd like to welcome them here to the Legislature. I know how proud they are of Elliott.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I too want to engage in the introductions. With us in the west gallery, just speaking with the Minister of Labour, are Lois Boggs, Jackie and Nathan Shaw, and Henry Watson, working on presumptive legislation. We welcome them to the House.

We also have with us the president and the vice-president of the OPFFA, firefighters Brian George and Fred LeBlanc. We welcome them and others to the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (BOB SHAW), 2006

### LOI BOB SHAW DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational diseases and injuries of firefighters / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail relativement aux maladies professionnelles et aux lésions des pompiers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I'm not going to reintroduce all of the members; I want to thank the member opposite for having introduced all of the people who are here today. He missed some of the family members who are also up in the gallery, some of the Hamilton firefighters as well as the experts in both the Toronto and Hamilton forces on compensation: Mr. Colin Grieve and Mr. Paul Atkinson. They're with us on this auspicious day of the introduction of this bill, which will basically see that firefighters get certain types of cancer or degenerative neurological diseases recognized as occupationally related and enshrined in the legislation of the WSIB. It's long overdue; other provinces have

done it. This is Ontario's opportunity to make sure that our firefighters, who put their lives on the line every day for the people of every community in this province, don't have to fight tooth and nail at the WSIB when one of their loved ones ends up dying of a disease that they contracted while fighting fires.

## VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would be remiss not to recognize in our east gallery today two distinguished members of Peterborough's fire department: Matt Parkhurst and Greg Simmons.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That is not a point of order, but we welcome everyone to the Legislature.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DU POISSON ET DE LA FAUNE

Mr. Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection du poisson et de la faune.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

1350

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** The bill amends the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, to prohibit the hunting and trapping of albino mammals.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** I have a question for the Premier. It has been almost 48 hours since a Conservative budget in Ottawa brought real tax relief for working families, for Canadians, for working seniors across Canada and in the province of Ontario. It has also been 48 hours that the McGuinty government has been silent about any plans to step into that tax room by once again breaking your election promise and raising taxes on working families and seniors in the province of Ontario. Please, Premier, confirm to the House that you have no such plans.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** We have no such plans.

**Mr. Hudak:** We're making progress. I thank the Premier. We asked the Premier that question many times yesterday, and I'm pleased to see that we're finally making progress and that the Premier gets it: Working



families and seniors in the province of Ontario can barely make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Let's go for one more. Let me remind the Premier what the last three years have brought in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario: higher taxes, despite campaign promises to the contrary; higher hydro rates, despite campaign promises to the contrary; higher home heating costs, higher gasoline prices and higher insurance rates. Working families cannot make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

I'll ask you, Premier, now that you've confirmed you're no longer going to increase taxes, will you go back to your original campaign promise and actually lower taxes for working families and seniors in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's always remarkable the amount of energy that the member opposite brings to his questions. I really appreciate the enthusiasm.

I think it's important to recognize the difference in terms of the situation that the federal Conservative government inherited and that our Liberal government inherited here in Ontario. The federal Conservative government under Prime Minister Harper were the beneficiaries of good fiscal management, and they found themselves in the wonderful position of having a surplus and enjoying the luxury of being able to cut taxes. What we inherited was something significantly and markedly different than that: We inherited a huge deficit, and we have been working our way out of that ever since. But I am proud to say that, as we do that, we've made substantial investments that have resulted in better public services, whether in our schools or in our hospitals, and the continuing growth of this economy. So we're proud of the decisions that we have made, notwithstanding the difficult financial circumstances that we inherited.

**Mr. Hudak:** I think the Premier well knows that his record tax increases have brought in some \$15 billion in additional revenue to the treasury of Ontario. It has been a gluttonous attack on the pocketbooks of working families and small businesses under the Dalton McGuinty government.

Let me tell you, it's not only in Ottawa, but I think you know that a New Democrat government in Saskatchewan and a New Democrat government in Manitoba are cutting taxes for working families and seniors; a Progressive Conservative government in Alberta is reducing taxes; and in Quebec and British Columbia, Liberal governments are reducing taxes for working families, for seniors, and aiding small businesses.

You are the head of a government that is increasingly out of touch with the realities of the pocketbooks of working families and seniors in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. When will you open your eyes? When will you realize what's happening at the end of the month for these working families? Will you join the rest of the provinces and the federal government and finally get to the task of reducing the tax burden on Ontario taxpayers?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think it's important for the member opposite and his party, as well as Ontarians, to

hear this: We're not going back into deficit. We've been there before; we were saddled with that. We will proceed in a thoughtful, responsible way. We have a long-term plan that is going to ensure we eliminate not just our fiscal deficit but the education deficit, the health care deficit and the infrastructure deficit.

I understand the member's obsession with tax cuts, but there is a time and a place for those. Right now we've got to work our way out of the mess they left us. As we do that, I'm proud of some of the improvements we have brought about for Ontario families, whether it's free immunization for children, which saves a family \$600 per child, or the new insulin pumps just announced in our budget. This September, 60,000 young people from low-income families are going to get grants—not loans but grants. We have enhanced student assistance generally. Auto insurance rates are down 13% in the province of Ontario. I think that's a step forward. That's evidence of the positive direction we are moving in.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** A question to the Premier: In today's *Globe and Mail*, you are quoted as suggesting you've got a lot of work to do to ensure that the provinces are speaking with one voice regarding fiscal arrangements. In yesterday's paper, you were quoted as expressing concern that the Bank of Canada's initiatives directed at Alberta are harmful to Ontario. In response, Premier Klein is quoted saying, "I wish he would talk to me. I haven't heard from Premier McGuinty on this issue or any other issue."

Premier, if you want to have provinces speaking with one voice, why would you not at least call Premier Klein with your concerns before going public? Why wouldn't you do that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I'm delighted to speak to this issue. The fact of the matter is, I did not direct any comments at my friend and colleague Premier Ralph Klein, but a reporter chose to interpret something in a way that elicited a response from the ever-colourful Ralph Klein, and I can appreciate that.

The point I was making is, I think, a good one; that is, that we ask the Bank of Canada to be mindful of our economic circumstances here in Ontario, and rather than design a monetary policy that is predominantly focused on the overheating economy in Alberta, they recognize that we find ourselves in different circumstances here, and while we have steady growth, it's not as rapid and not as much in need of cooling off as are other parts of the country. I thought that was a good point to make.

**Mr. Runciman:** Premier, yesterday's side-swipe of Alberta wasn't the first time you've blindsided a provincial counterpart. At last month's meeting of the Council of the Federation, you caught your colleagues off guard with a press release outlining your view on equalization and going against the one-communiqué tradition. In



reaction to that blindside, Prince Edward Island Premier Binns said, "We just haven't seen this before. It's disappointing." That sentiment was echoed by other Premiers.

Premier, how can you expect to achieve provincial consensus on the fiscal imbalance when you apparently prefer to play politics rather than work in a co-operative way with your provincial colleagues?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm just not going to apologize for standing up for Ontario.

*Applause.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Government bench, it's one of two things: I either stop the clock or the Premier won't have time to respond.

Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Just so the members opposite understand, the proposal that was on the table, which was presented in Montreal by a panel that had been commissioned by the Council of the Federation, would have required that Ontario taxpayers contribute \$1.8 billion more toward equalization. I said that is unacceptable. I said that, given the fact we are contributing close to \$5 billion on an annual basis, I thought we were doing our fair share.

1400

**Mr. Runciman:** The Premier could have at least not blindsided his provincial colleagues. He continues to play this political game. All parties in this Legislature have indicated our support of the effort to redress the fiscal imbalance. Our concern is your apparent inability to build bridges to accomplish that goal. You've blindsided and offended many of your provincial counterparts on more than one occasion. You and your members, on almost a daily basis, have attacked the new federal government from the day they came into office.

Ontario has a great history of leading the way in nation building, a reputation that you are damaging, if not destroying, for purely—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, Minister of Education. Member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Runciman:** Ontario has a great history of leading the way in nation building, a reputation that you are damaging, if not destroying, for purely political purposes, trying to portray yourself as Mr. Ontario. Premier—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Leeds–Grenville, if you'd put the question.

**Mr. Runciman:** —when will you put politics aside and make a sincere and honest effort to work with federal and provincial governments to find a national fiscal arrangement that works for all Canadians and stop—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The question has been put. Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Obviously, I don't share the perspective brought by the member opposite as represented in his question. We think, on this side of the House, that we can both stand up for our province and be proud and patriotic Canadians at the same time. In fact,

we believe that a strong Ontario is only going to serve to benefit all Canadians, no matter where they live across this great country of ours.

The member opposite is right in the sense that we have been commissioned by history to play a continuing leadership role in the evolution of this magnificent country, and we will never, ever walk away from that responsibility. But at the same time, we will not walk away from our responsibility as representatives of the people of Ontario to ensure that we get a fair shake. That's all we're asking for, and in that regard I'm very much looking forward to my meeting this afternoon with Prime Minister Harper and to communicating and conveying to him our concerns when it comes to how we're going to resolve the fiscal imbalance. We'll do that in the way we've always done it here in Ontario: in a way that is both determined and respectful.

**Mr. Runciman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would respectfully request that when government members scream down opposition members asking legitimate questions, you stop the clock.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Leeds–Grenville, I did stop the clock. I gave you the opportunity to conclude your question. I think I could use the co-operation—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I think I could use the co-operation of everybody in here, and then we'd get on with question period in the way we should.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I have a question for the Premier. Motorists from across Ontario are suffering from pump shock. They're angry about big oil's price gouging, like a recent rip-off in Timmins where the price of gas went from \$1.10 to \$1.42 a litre overnight for no reason. People can't understand why the same gas in the ground goes up 30 cents a litre overnight.

Not long ago, you and your colleagues used to advocate for gas price regulation to stop gas price gouging and rip-offs and to ease people's pain at the pumps. You used to advocate it. When will you do it, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I think if the leader of the NDP were to check the record, he would know that I have never been a proponent of regulating gas prices, and I'll tell you why. There are some jurisdictions today in Canada which do in fact regulate their gas prices. The price in Prince Edward Island today, which is a regulated jurisdiction, is \$1.20 a litre; in New Brunswick, where it's regulated, it's \$1.14 a litre; and in Newfoundland, it's \$1.22 a litre. Today gas prices in Ontario range from 92 cents to \$1.07. Prices in Ontario have been on average 20% lower than the regulated prices in the Maritime provinces. That's why we are not going to proceed with regulating gas prices in the province of Ontario.



**Mr. Hampton:** The people in those provinces will tell you that gas prices were far higher before they implemented gas price regulation.

Earlier in the week you said that Ontario didn't have the constitutional authority to stop gas price gouging, but now we see that Nova Scotia has found the constitutional authority, and so have Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Quebec. Premier, can you tell us why only the McGuinty government, in all of eastern Canada, argues that it doesn't have the constitutional authority to implement gas price regulation?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, if the leader of the NDP checks the record, he will see that I never claimed that we didn't have constitutional authority to regulate gas prices.

I think what's important is that what the leader of the NDP is advocating would effectively result—not effectively; in real terms—in an increase in gas prices in Ontario. Perhaps it is not surprising, given that when they were in government the NDP raised the gas tax by 30%. We're not going to raise the gas tax by 30% or any other amount, and we're not going to regulate gas prices in the province of Ontario. But I can say, by way of one positive initiative that will help out our motorists, that automobile insurance in Ontario has come down over 13% on our watch.

**Mr. Hampton:** I invite you to go out and find those people who have had a reduction in their auto insurance premiums.

Before the election, when you were on this side of the Legislature, you used to harangue the former government about adopting your plan for gas price regulation. You were supported by your Minister of Tourism, who brought in a private member's bill, and your Minister of Northern Development, who had his private member's bill, and your Minister of Citizenship, who had his private member's bill, all advocating gas price regulation. But now, suddenly, you're a defender of big oil, and you're rolling over for big oil and abandoning consumers.

Premier, after advocating so fiercely, you and your colleagues, for gas price regulation when you were in opposition and failing to do anything now, why should consumers trust anything you say about gas price regulation or anything else?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, if the leader of the NDP doesn't trust my perspective that I bring on regulated gas prices, then he can check the record there for himself. The fact is that prices have been higher in those jurisdictions where they've had regulated gas pricing than we've had here in Ontario, where it's not regulated. Also, the NDP did in fact raise gas taxes by 30%.

In addition to bringing down automobile insurance by some 13%, there's also our ethanol program that we are bringing online, which will mandate the use of 5% ethanol by 2007 and 10% by 2010. Why is that important, beyond the environmental cleanliness associated with it? Because it also acts as a hedge when it comes to international oil and gas prices, which are beyond our

control. We've also doubled the sales tax rebate in this budget for hybrid cars to \$2,000 as a way to encourage people to conserve on gasoline and reduce their gasoline costs.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Meanwhile, the price of gas goes from \$1.10 to \$1.42 a litre in Timmins, and the Premier thinks that's okay.

To the Premier: During the last election campaign, Liberal candidates went to tenants across the province and promised real rent control to protect them. They said that when a tenant vacates an apartment, the landlord would not be able to raise the rent sky-high for the next tenant. Liberals said that tenants wouldn't be deprived of legal protection just because their apartment unit was built after 1991. Premier, why did you break your promise this time to tenants?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** We're very proud of the bill introduced yesterday by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in particular, of those aspects of it that will bring greater protection and fairness for tenants. Let me list some of those:

—It eliminates an unfair eviction process that had been in place, so that henceforth every tenant will have the opportunity for a hearing or mediation;

—We're going to ensure that tenants receive the benefit of energy savings. We think that's pretty important;

—We are going to require that rents be reduced when utility costs go down. That has not been the case in the past;

—We're going to insist that there be no more paying for capital projects forever. Once those costs have been recouped by the landlord, then the rent goes back down;

—We're also saying that there will be no rent increases if a building isn't being maintained and there's a work order outstanding.

1410

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Answer?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** We think those are positive initiatives that introduce more fairness for Ontario's tenants.

**Mr. Hampton:** The question was about the real rent control that you promised. I want to just quote a couple of people. There's this quote: "The people of St. Paul's can rest assured that [I] will not rest ... until we restore real, unqualified rent control with no ifs, ands or buts." Who said that? Michael Bryant, the now Attorney General.

Then there's this quote: "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol; it will be gone." Who said that? Oh, Mr. Caplan, also in your cabinet.

Or this quote: "I want to be clear about our plan for rent control.... We will get rid of vacancy decontrol that allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves." Who said that? Dalton McGuinty.



Premier, why did you break your promises to tenants? Why don't we see real rent control?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think that David Miller, mayor of our largest city, mayor of that city which has the greatest number of tenants, is worthy of some consideration in terms of the comments that he made with respect to this legislation. He said:

"The (current) legislation is very anti-tenant, and there are significant improvements in the (proposed) legislation that will increase tenants' rights and make the system much, much fairer for them.

"Toronto is a very expensive place to live for tenants, and tens of thousands of people are just struggling to get by, and this legislation is critical to ensuring they can live in dignity."

I agree with the mayor of that city which has the greatest population of tenants in it.

I think it's important to understand what has been happening to rents as well. Last year, the average rent increase in Ontario was 0.7%. The vacancy rate today stands at 3.7%. Vacancy rates are highest—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Answer?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** —at the low end of the market. In Toronto, in the lowest 20% of the market, the vacancy rate sat at 5.5% last year. The market is moving in the right direction, and we're bringing in additional protections for Ontario tenants.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, I want to ask about your promise of real rent control. David Miller may say what he wishes. As far as I can tell, David Miller is not a tenant.

Here's what tenants say. A quote from Dan McIntyre, coordinator with the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations: "Tenants will be very exploited by this act."

Here's another tenant, Mary Papert, a tenant in Waterloo: "We definitely wanted to go back to rent control."

Here is Marva Burnett, a tenant in Scarborough who works with ACORN Canada: "[T]his is still the landlord protection act.... Thanks for nothing."

Premier, once again you've broken your promise of implementing real rent control. Given that, why should tenants trust anything Dalton McGuinty says about rent control now?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm sorry to disappoint the leader of the NDP, but we're bringing in real rent controls for Ontario tenants. We are requiring rent reductions when utility costs go down. Tenants have been asking us to do that for a long time. We said there will be no more rent increases to cover the costs of regular maintenance. Tenants have been asking us for that, as well, for a long time. They have told us they don't want to pay for capital projects forever. I think that's a very fair and legitimate request. That, too, is something that we responded to in this legislation.

Again, we have brought in answers to those concerns that have been raised time and time again by Ontario tenants. We have a good market in place, which is ensuring that there's a high vacancy rate and, at the same time,

we're bringing in fairness with far greater protections for Ontario tenants.

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the Premier. The general public has started to realize that you are once again pulling the wool over their eyes with your decision to pass a piece of legislation that will reduce the frequency of municipal elections from three years to four years.

Premier, your government did this without telling anyone, let alone discussing the change in public. Instead, the McGuinty Liberals inserted it in their budget bill and decided that they would allow only one day of debate on the budget bill, which was today.

Premier, let me read a quote by you on May 12, 2003, where you were emphatic: "Ramming through bills without proper debate weakens our system of democracy." Well, Premier, I suggest that this is exactly what you are doing, and I ask why you are ramming through this piece of legislation without proper debate, since you already agreed that that was not an appropriate way of doing it.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** This particular initiative is in keeping with our determination as a government to demonstrate real respect for Ontario municipalities. The member opposite will know that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has been asking for this change now for some time.

We first announced this in February. We introduced legislation in March. It will be debated throughout April. There is a committee in May. There will be a three-month process after years of local debate on this issue.

The member opposite may somehow draw a distinction between the people who serve the public in this place and the people who serve others in Ontario municipalities through municipal councils. I am not prepared to draw that distinction. I think that is the kind of thing, again, that demonstrates respect for our municipal politicians, unlike, obviously, what the members opposite are prepared to do.

**Mr. Hardeman:** The last time a change in this area took place was in 1982, and I had the privilege of being in a council chamber where the discussion was taking place. There was intense debate. Incidentally, Premier, it was a very public debate—note, I said "public"—that focused on accountability. There was a great deal of concern raised publicly that, by extending the election term, municipal councillors would become less accountable to the public they serve. There are many who believe that fewer and less frequent local elections will serve only the interests of politicians seeking to delay their accountability to the voters; our democracy will be the weaker for it.

So I ask you again: Will you do what is right, right here and right now in this Legislature, to honour the democratic process and allow public consultation?



Premier, will you allow the people of Ontario to have a say on this very important change?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think I've just demonstrated that this is hardly something that can be categorized as being rushed through. It's hardly something that can be categorized as something that was not sought by municipalities in Ontario.

By the way, this kind of legislation with respect to four-year terms is now in Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick. But I would contrast it with the Tory record when it comes to the Fewer Municipal Politicians Act that was introduced in December 1999. It was time-allocated. There were no committee hearings. It was introduced on December 6 and passed on December 20—14 days from start to finish, including weekends.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** So if the member opposite is going to deign to offer lessons with respect to courtesy and ensuring there is appropriate time for debate, he might want to review his own government's record.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I really would like to hear the Premier's answer. Heckling from his side of the House doesn't help. So we'll get on with a new question.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Premier. Today, I introduced a bill in memory of Hamilton's Bob Shaw, a firefighter who died of cancer of the esophagus in March 2004. In fact, the short title of the bill is Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Bob Shaw), 2006.

Bob's physicians indicate that he contracted his cancer while on the job, yet his family has been made to suffer the indignity and insult of being denied compensation by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Premier, the Shaw family is not alone; there are many other families who have suffered this indignity. Will you do what is right now, and support my bill that ensures firefighters receive compensation for occupational diseases?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for the question and for her interest in this issue. I, too, welcome the families here today. I think every one of us in this House expresses our condolences to those families who have lost loved ones. I think everyone in this House, as well, recognizes the important role our firefighters play in this province. Governments of all stripes have been there to support our firefighters, and will continue to be there to support our firefighters.

We recognize that dedication. I think yesterday the member heard a question asked in this House regarding this very issue. We know it is an issue that has been looked at for a number of years by governments of all

stripes. This government is prepared to look seriously at this issue. That's why yesterday I announced that my parliamentary assistant, the member from Thornhill, Mario Racco, will undertake a comprehensive review and consultation and report back to me on this issue on July 15 of this year.

1420

**Ms. Horwath:** Minister, the families that are here today are here because they've witnessed the injustice of a system that refuses to compensate workers who lay their lives on the line every single day in this province. Telling them you're simply going to do more planning and more studying is just not enough. As it is now, roughly 300 Ontario firefighters have had their compensation claims for job-related illnesses such as cancer, leukemia and heart disease flatly denied by the WSIB. Five other provinces—and you know this—already recognize irrefutable links between firefighting and occupational diseases. In fact, they used Ontario's evidence to get that legislation in place in other provinces. Minister, the science is there and you know it is. Ontario needs to catch up with other provinces that are already doing this. Stalling time is over. Will you show some respect for the fallen firefighters and their families by just, today, acting on this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** If we were going to turn this into a political issue, I would ask why that report that was done in the 1990s wasn't acted on by the NDP government at that point. This isn't about rehashing the past. This is about looking ahead, and that's what we are doing. That's why yesterday we announced that my parliamentary assistant will undertake the comprehensive review. It's going to work with the WSIB. We recognize as well that the WSIB—you sit there and shake your head. As I'm saying, we take this seriously. The families are here today.

We want to move forward on this issue. The WSIB has already reviewed a number of cases. They've reconsidered and allowed nine cancer claims for firefighters. That's good news. Close to 80% of firefighter claims for some types of cancers are allowed. This is a much higher rate than with other occupations. This isn't a political debate. This is a debate about the lives of family members. We take it seriously. I'm looking forward to receiving the report from my parliamentary assistant, in consultation with firefighters, families, and the WSIB, on July 15.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough—Rouge River):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. As you know, commuting around Toronto, especially on city streets, can be not only costly but can also be quite time-consuming. Many people are driving just by themselves, and with the high price of gas it's just too expensive to operate a car every day. I've heard from frustrated constituents who are looking at alternatives to driving their cars. The Ministry of Transportation and previous



governments have set bureaucratic roadblocks in front of people trying to use smaller, more fuel-efficient motor scooters as an alternative to their cars. These mopeds are a real solution. They are environmentally friendlier and more cost-effective. Minister, what is the issue here?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** First of all, I would like to thank the honourable member for his question. The issue here is that we used to have an M class. We have a graduated licensing system for cars and we also have a graduated licensing system for motorcycles. Anybody who wanted to ride mopeds could ride them by using the G licence, but anybody who wanted to use the scooters needed the M licence for the motorcycles. In order to ride the scooter, they had to get the licence for the motorcycle, for which they have to go on the highway. What we have done is made it very convenient to use fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles. We have changed the M licence to an M and L licence for people who want to use scooters and mopeds, so that they can get it on the same vehicle that they want to ride on, which will make it more convenient and will also be good for the people who want to use fuel-efficient vehicles.

**Mr. Balkissoon:** Minister, I know our government has done a considerable amount to help reduce gridlock, clean up our air and get people moving on public transit. We introduced car-pooling lanes on Highways 404 and 403 to get people car-pooling to reduce congestion and harmful car emissions. What has the Ontario government done to support people who want to drive moped scooters?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** We have made it easier for them. We have created a special class of licence so people who want to just drive or ride scooters and mopeds can have a special class of licence. They don't have to go on the highway anymore. We have made it more convenient and easier for them to get it. That will affect fuel-efficiency and will also make it easier for them to do that.

#### STUDENT IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Minister of Education: Some 1,800 students were suspended in Waterloo region because of a lack of records relating to immunization. Many of those students come from immigrant families who have difficulty understanding the notes that were perhaps sent home. It caused considerable confusion and frustration to many families. My question to you is this: Were you aware that these 1,800 students were going to be suspended? Were you aware of the policy of the board? Do you endorse how this was handled? And if not, what steps have you taken to ensure it doesn't happen in other boards across the province?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I think it's fair to say that no one would have realized the number this year, although this particular area has been higher on average in terms of the numbers of students that haven't had the documentation available to show that they in fact

have been immunized. It's important to note that this is a serious public health issue of which the member opposite is well aware from his days in government as well. Public boards of health today, thanks to some substantial assistance in terms of support, are able to do much more outreach into communities to see that they have good immunization records for students. Because we have had outbreaks in the past, especially recently and in this area, it really is important that the public health unit be available to do its job. I think in the supplementary we should talk about the method and how helpful this was to the students.

**Mr. Klees:** That is the point of my question, Minister. No one disagrees with the importance of immunization and no one disagrees that the records should be on file with the board. What we are asking you is whether you agree with how this matter was handled. There are many other boards across the province with a high percentage of immigrant families who quite frankly will not understand the forms that come home. Is there not something that you as the minister can do to show leadership on this issue to ensure we have a system in place in this province so that this is handled in the appropriate way? That's my question to you.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We did in fact do some investigating to determine how much time the families were given to respond, and they have had literally several months. I do think that it is notable that we are dealing with perhaps a very different and varied population so that it calls for some thinking to be had in ensuring that families really understand the importance of letters that are sent home and finding ways to engage the families and parents as to their importance. I do believe that our ministry has a very good opportunity to do this. This member will know that we have launched our parent engagement strategy, which gives us, on a province-wide basis, the ability to get information to all parent councils, to all parents, and engage them with items that are very important, like this health issue. This will be an issue for discussion through our parent engagement strategy, and I appreciate the member opposite's interest in it.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** My question is for the Premier. Eighty-nine-year-old Frances Carter moved into Versa-Care Windsor Place about a year ago with her husband, Elmer. She says that at \$5.34 per day, the meals are terrible. She also says that personal items have been stolen from her and her husband's room and went on to state, "We went right to the top man. He didn't do nothing."

According to the Windsor Star, the number of legitimate complaints filed against Versa-Care Windsor Place is more than seven times the provincial average.

Premier, you promised a revolution in long-term care. When are seniors like Frances Carter and her husband, Elmer, going to be the beneficiaries of that revolution?



1430

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I appreciate the question raised by the member. Let me just say that I'm sure that all of us in this chamber feel a special responsibility when it comes to ensuring that our most vulnerable and our seniors—our parents and grandparents—receive standards that are in keeping with the highest.

This particular home has had challenges. It was placed under probation while they addressed risk areas. This is my understanding of the progress they've made to date: They have enhanced staff education; they have implemented changes to their quality management; they have improved policies to deal with wound care; there has been more staff training; and they have worked long and hard to address many complaints of residents and family. Enforcement inspections will continue at this home, and the ministry expects a further report just next week on compliance.

**Mr. Prue:** My question again is to the Premier. In 2004-05, Versa-Care Windsor failed to meet 29 provincial standards. You have said that some few small things are taking place, but provincial sanctions against the for-profit long-term-care facility were removed under your watch in only three months; three months later, all of those sanctions were removed.

The Windsor Star said today that the Ministry of Health spokesman, John Letherby, admitted, "The fact that Windsor is experiencing a shortage of long-term beds was a factor in removing the sanction."

Premier, seniors like Frances and Elmer Carter built this province, and they deserve to live with more dignity than this care facility is providing. Why are you letting the shortage of beds compromise patient care in Windsor?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'll return to the specifics momentarily, but it's important to understand that, overall, there has been a revitalization of long-term-care homes under way after too many years of neglect. We have increased investments by 35% since we took office; that's an additional \$740 million. This year alone, there's another increase of 5.8%; that's a \$155-million increase. We have now in position over 2,300 new staff, including 472 nurses. We're regulating 24/7 nursing. There's a minimum of two baths per week, diet plans have been reviewed and approved by dietitians, and there are more frequent and tougher inspections.

To return to the specifics of this particular institution, again, it has been under close scrutiny, enforcement inspections will continue, and we expect a further report next week on compliance.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Yesterday, you announced that you had appointed the Honourable Jane Stewart, a former federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and a prominent and respected long-time

resident of the Brantford area, as a special representative to the Caledonia discussions. I also understand that the federal government appointed Barbara McDougall as its special representative. I appreciate your leadership and that of our Premier in the desire to bring a peaceful conclusion to this very serious and sensitive situation. Minister, can you tell me specifically what Ms. Stewart's role will be in Caledonia?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I very much appreciate the question, so that we can certainly make clear that two weeks ago, when negotiating an end to this dispute, it was agreed upon by all parties that this would be done in two phases. The second phase was agreed upon, that, by Friday of this week, both the federal and provincial governments would nominate and make public long-term negotiators who have higher profiles so that we could expedite the process that was actually already begun two years ago. We're very pleased with the federal appointment of ex-minister Barbara McDougall, an excellent choice by Minister Jim Prentice, and I'm very pleased with our choice, Jane Stewart. Not only does Jane have tremendous experience in this file, but she knows that area and has great relations with many of the Six Nations people in that part of the world.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Levac:** Unlike those across the way, we take this extremely seriously, as I do.

I'm very pleased that someone of Ms. Stewart's expertise and knowledge, in particular of the Six Nations and of the issues in general—and the aboriginal friends she does have—will be representing the province. We have to resolve the situation, a very sensitive one, and ensure that all communities are returned to normal conditions as soon as possible.

Minister, not long ago, you announced that former Premier David Peterson was also a special representative working on resolving the issues in Caledonia. Does the appointment of Ms. Stewart or Ms. McDougall mean that Mr. Peterson's work has been completed in Caledonia, and if not, could you explain to us in more detail how the two-phased negotiations are taking place?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I appreciate the question, so that we can make it clear that David Peterson, former Premier of Ontario, is still on the job working on the immediate issues, which are basically two: the removal of the barricades on the roads and basically settling the occupation issue on the Douglas Creek Estates development. The former Premier is working on that; he continues to have meetings with all sides in this dispute. There is a lot of goodwill. I was in touch with all the different parties last night, and they're very happy with the progress, and that work is continuing. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I'd like to thank David Peterson for his work.

#### AMATEUR SPORT

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is for the Premier. On Tuesday, Ontarians



received much-needed and welcome tax relief from the federal government when the finance minister, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, announced there would be a \$500 physical fitness tax credit to cover registration fees for children's sports. Unfortunately, people are telling us that under your failed energy policy and your high taxing regime, it is being eaten up by the additional costs due to electricity rates at arenas across this province.

Your tax-and-spend policy, your health tax, your skyrocketing property rates have succeeded in driving businesses out of this province. Will you not be satisfied until you've driven our children off the ice as well? What are you going to do to help kids in Hockeyville—Barry's Bay—and across this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** The Minister of Health Promotion would like to speak to this.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** That sounds more like Hockeyville, coming from the honourable member. The fact of the matter remains that this government is committed to our young athletes. In fact, it was the McGuinty government that brought in the community use of schools program after your party gouged those young people and they could no longer afford to rent gymnasiums and classrooms in the schools. Your party also cut amateur sport funding by 42% under your reign of terror; our government has instituted the Quest for Gold program, where, just a few weeks ago, almost \$3 million went directly to athletes, including some in the honourable member's riding, if I'm not mistaken.

Finally, the communities in action fund, something we're very proud of, is providing funding for amateur sport and recreation groups. Five million dollars is available this year, and application forms will be available by May 26. I encourage the honourable member to encourage people in Pembroke to apply for that funding, because we're back in the business of supporting our young people.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That's cold comfort to people whose children are forced to leave hockey in this province because of the raging electricity rates under your failed energy policy. At the Mateway centre in Renfrew, electricity rates are 20% more than they budgeted for last year. In Pembroke, they're looking at \$12,000 increases in three different facilities this year. In Barry's Bay, they're expecting a 30% increase this year.

People cannot afford to keep their kids in hockey when the association has to charge so much for ice time because of the electricity costs under your failed policy. We need some real relief for families in this province. You people want to keep digging into their pockets, unlike the federal finance minister, who incidentally, I'm proud to say, will be speaking at an event in my riding tomorrow night.

When can this government show some real help for real Ontarians and working families?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I know that the honourable member is a little embarrassed by their own track record in

government. They did nothing for amateur sport and they did nothing for recreation. We brought in, for instance, the Ontario trails strategy, with \$3.5 million to help those communities across the province get young people and seniors alike out hiking in this great province. We've created, as a government, 230,000 jobs that we can be very proud of. We don't have to take a back seat to the Conservatives on economic policy. With respect to amateur sport, I noticed that the honourable member didn't respond to the fact that his riding has benefited from the communities in action fund. The young people in his riding have benefited from the community use of schools program, a \$20-million investment to help take down one of those economic barriers that young people faced under the Conservative regime. It's something we are very proud of.

1440

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** New question?

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. The member for Nickel Belt and I, like a lot of other parents, are hockey parents. We talk to a lot of hockey parents here in Toronto and elsewhere in the province, and we know that paying for hockey, whether it's for your daughter or your son, is an expensive undertaking. We also know that, thanks to the McGuinty government, that's going to become a lot more expensive for a lot of parents, whether their children are playing hockey, ringette or simply trying to learn how to skate. My question for you is, do you support McGuinty government policies that are making skating, figure skating, ringette and hockey for kids more and more expensive for working families?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I reject the premise of the argument, first and foremost. This government does not apologize for investing \$20 million to ensure that young people have access to gymnasiums, classrooms, playgrounds and so on. I also respect the fact that we put together, under my predecessor, the Honourable Jim Bradley, the communities in action fund. I know the honourable member's riding has benefited from CIAF funding, which gives seed funding to allow young people to engage in physical activity and sport and recreation, because they don't have the necessary resources to invest.

The fact is, we have a very proud track record of supporting these young athletes, whom we're very proud of. The Quest for Gold program, for instance—I have been around the province. I was in Kingston the other day meeting with parents and young people who have benefited directly from this money. It's not the old line, "The cheque's in the mail," or, "I'm a politician; I'm here to help you." The money is in the hands of these young people, and it's allowing them to represent our province—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of kids who play boys' hockey, hun-



dreds of thousands of girls who play girls' hockey, kids who are taking figure skating, trying to learn how to skate and play ringette. In total, we're talking about millions of kids and families across this province, and many of them are looking at \$100-per-player or \$100-per-skater increases in order for their kids to play Canada's national game. I'm simply saying to you that you talk about what you may have done over here or over there, but we're talking about millions of kids and parents who are worried about whether or not their kids will be able to play next year. How do you justify policies that may cut off literally hundreds of thousands of modest- and low-income kids from being able to skate, take figure skating, play hockey or play ringette?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** Let me talk about the community use of schools, which is lowering the cost for young people to go and train and play various sports. Ilene Watt, the executive director of Basketball Ontario, said, "On behalf of Basketball Ontario, I cannot thank you and your staff enough for moving forward with the CUS program. It has made an incredible difference. The seven years of cutbacks in funding to the school system by the previous government actually eroded the number of children playing ... by an estimated 10,000 as gym fees continued to rise."

When the community use of schools program was bought in, the NDP, as a result of a budget vote, voted against that program, so it's a little rich to hear the honourable member up on his hind legs talking about support for young people in sport when his track record is abysmal and he voted against the program that brings costs down for young people in Ontario.

### SMOKING CESSATION

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, recently you came to my riding of Markham to present one of my constituents, Dr. Howard Wu, with a Heather Crowe Award in recognition of his efforts to promote a smoke-free Ontario at the local level.

As you know, this government created the award to honour the leadership and commitment of tobacco control activist Heather Crowe, who fought to improve the health of Ontarians by eliminating second-hand smoke in the workplace and in enclosed public spaces. Dr. Wu exemplifies how an individual can make a profound difference and bring about change in a community, in particular among the Chinese Canadian community, by helping smokers quit.

This being the first week of May, how is our government ensuring that the province is prepared for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act coming into force on May 31?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** I want to thank the honourable member from Markham for inviting me to his riding and to congratulate Dr. Wu on receiving the Heather Crowe Award. He is a great leader within the Chinese Canadian community. To date, over 140 individuals—community volunteers and leaders

across Ontario—have received Heather Crowe Awards. I thank honourable members from both sides of the House for their participation in this program.

I was very pleased, when Minister Duncan released the McGuinty government's budget, that an additional \$10 million has been allocated to the Smoke-Free Ontario program. This includes money for enforcement and smoking prevention campaigns, particularly among young people. Our government is providing \$8.4 million to public health units to bring enforcement officers into communities—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Answer?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:**—which represents 100% of enforcement. This is another example of the McGuinty government uploading the costs, and we're very proud to ensure that these dollars are going into enforcement for the protection of young people and old alike.

**Mr. Wong:** It is good to learn that a comprehensive approach is being undertaken. A recent report by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse showed that in Ontario the total cost of tobacco-related illness and lost productivity was \$6.1 billion in 2002.

Minister, as you know, there are very large and vibrant ethnic communities in my riding for whom English is a second language. We in Markham are fortunate to have a local physician and smoking-cessation activist as committed as Dr. Wu to raise awareness and to educate the public on the ills of tobacco. But this may not be the case for all ridings. Minister, how is our government ensuring that the new Smoke-Free Ontario legislation is understood by all Ontarians?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I think that, regardless of political affiliation, all of us in this Legislature will be very proud on May 31, when the Smoke-Free Ontario legislation comes into effect. I certainly was when I stood in my place in June and voted for the legislation, because we realized that 16,000 of our fellow citizens will die prematurely as a result of smoking-related diseases. That's 44 people a day.

We have now provided, through our website, smoking cessation tips and other information on smoking in 22 different languages, and we have more languages to come. We've encouraged people to go on to our website, which is [Healthyontario.com](http://Healthyontario.com). I'm also very pleased to note that we have provided \$2 million for an aboriginal anti-smoking strategy, because there are higher rates of smoking among certain new Canadians and our First Nations people. So it's something that we are very aggressively working on as we head to May 31.

### TOURISM

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo—Wellington):** Would the Minister of Tourism inform the House what, if anything, he has done to advocate for Ontario's hospitality industry, which will be impacted negatively by Bill 53?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I'm always advocating on behalf of Ontario's



tourism industry, whether it's on Bill 53 or whether it's on a topic that I know is near and dear to the heart of the member: the passport issue that exists at the present time.

As he would know, and I know he's on our side on this issue of the passport, we have a situation now where we have Canadians and Americans, business people on both sides, chambers of commerce, Republicans and Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats on this side, and all of us recognize the importance of that issue. Just as I would advocate on behalf of the tourism industry as it relates to Bill 53, I'm also advocating on part of that issue. I'm pleased that there are many allies in all of the caucuses that are on our side on this particular issue. I know that there are people on both sides of the border who will continue to press the issue very hard, to the benefit, I think, of the people of this province.

1450

**Mr. Arnott:** The question was about Bill 53, the city of Toronto bill, containing within it a provision which will allow Toronto council to levy yet another tax on drinks, which are already taxed three times, according to the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association. They say this will reduce their sales, lower operating margins and jeopardize thousands of jobs in Toronto's restaurants and bars. This comes at a time when Ontario's tourism business people are struggling, during a time when US visits to Ontario have plummeted to a 33-year low.

I will ask the minister once more: Will he go on the record today and represent Ontario's tourism interests, as I know he would want to do, and express support for an amendment to Bill 53 to get rid of this pending new tax?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** As the member would know, we'll be interested in all the representations that are made to the committee on this piece of legislation and the other piece of legislation. I note, because I've heard many of the questions that have come from his fellow caucus members about the federal budget, that in fact there was an increase in some alcohol taxes in the federal budget. I would have thought that in the supplementary question to me from the excellent member opposite, the critic in the field of tourism, he would have asked me what I think of increasing the alcohol taxes in the federal budget and what effect that would have on tourism. I can say to him that it may well have a detrimental effect on tourism in this province. I'll call upon him to speak to all of his friends in the federal Conservative caucus on this particular matter, including Mr. Flaherty, the finance minister.

## VISITORS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce the grade 5 students from Glencairn Public School in Kitchener.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That's not a point of order, but they're welcome.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to

introduce a couple of members from the Sikh community here. We have Mr. Bains from India, Mr. Grewal, who's the editor of the Punj Pani newspaper in Punjabi, and other community members.

## PETITIONS

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition today on behalf of a Port Perry nursing home, Joy Husak, Heather Cooper, Karen Sansom, John Dodds, Liz Hobson and the family and community council members. It reads as follows:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, go to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I'm pleased to present that to Philippe and sign it in support of my riding.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** I rise to present a petition on a similar matter: a call for increased funding for long-term-care facilities of approximately \$300 million to increase the amount of care time that residents of these facilities receive by about 20 minutes per day. For many, this would make a substantial difference in their lives.

### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition signed by a number of people that was passed on to me by the Consumer Federation of Canada and reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;



"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated ... form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and credit card numbers.

"(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

"(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reason.

"(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

#### HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

I want to thank Marilyn Ruttan and Kim Taylor from Re/Max of Wasaga Beach for sending me the petition.

#### COLORECTAL CANCER

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition that's been sent to me by the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada, and it reads as follows:

Whereas a "2002 report by the National Cancer Commission on Colorectal Cancer Screening and recommendations of Cancer Care Ontario" make it clear that "it is incumbent that the Ontario government

introduce a population-based screening program for colorectal cancer immediately;

"That the Ontario government has not implemented a colorectal cancer screening program, and owes an extra duty to provide the standard of care that is recommended in the treatment of colorectal cancer;

"That the Ontario government has elected not to fund the medications which form the standard of care for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer; namely Oxaliplatin and Avastin;

"That the Ontario government should rightfully fund these medications;

"That forcing patients to pay for these drugs constitutes a two-tiered health care system which is unacceptable for the standard treatment of Canada's second-biggest cancer killer....;"

Whereas the petitioners ask the assembly of Ontario to do two things:

"(a) introduce and implement a population-based colorectal cancer screening program;

"(b) fund the necessary medications for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer...."

I agree with the petitioners and I affix my signature to this.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to improving public transit and eliminating gridlock;

"Whereas the McGuinty government understands that public transit over the course of the past 10 years has been in a constant state of decline and has therefore committed \$1.2 billion for public transit and local road and bridge repair; and

"Whereas proper mini-buses for the handicapped are still not being used in all areas;

"We, the undersigned, therefore continue to support and encourage the McGuinty government's commitment to public transit, ensuring that, throughout the province, everyone is guaranteed fast, reliable and adequate transportation."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it, and give it to page Isaac, who's here with me today.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I have a petition presented to me by staff at Hilltop Manor in Merrickville, and it reads:

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per

resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I strongly support this and have affixed my signature.

1500

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, sent to me from the good folks at the long-term-care facility in the great town of Tillsonburg.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I have affixed my signature, as I agree with the petition.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario farmers are facing difficulties in earning their living and supporting their families;

"Whereas urban residents, such as those in Toronto, count on a reliable food supply from Ontario farmers; and

"Whereas farming is an integral part of the Ontario economy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To ensure that Ontario farmers are supported so that all residents can count on a reliable, well-priced, safe food supply for all Ontario residents."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Caroline, who is here with me today.

#### DRIVER PENALTIES

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** I have a petition presented to me by the Bikers Rights

Organization and Brian Burnette from Lindsay, in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there currently exists an inequity in penalties under the Highway Traffic Act whereby a driver causing death or grievous harm to another due to an unsafe turn or other act may only see a maximum \$500 fine, and such is an inadequate penalty;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass into law the Highway Traffic Act amendment, as proposed by the Bikers Rights Organization, which calls for stiffer penalties for drivers involved in fatal accidents where their error caused fatality."

It's signed by hundreds of people from my riding.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to improving public transit and eliminating gridlock;

"Whereas the McGuinty government understands that public transit over the course of the past 10 years has been in a constant state of decline and has therefore committed \$1.2 billion for public transit and local road and bridge repair; and

"Whereas proper mini-buses for the handicapped are still not being used in all areas;

"We, the undersigned, therefore continue to support and encourage the McGuinty government's commitment to public transit, ensuring that, throughout the province, everyone is guaranteed fast, reliable and adequate transportation."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Philippe, who is here with me today.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present another petition on behalf of my constituents. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to



receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I'm pleased to sign this in support of my constituents, and present it to Billy.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I am so glad that my colleague, Peter Fonseca has joined me for this petition, because I know this is very close to his heart as well. It's addressed to the Legislature of Ontario and reads as follows:

“Whereas Portuguese Canadians number 171,545 in the Toronto census metropolitan area, many of whom encounter serious barriers (language, culture and location) to accessing community and long-term-care services; and

“There are no long-term-care homes dedicated to the needs of Portuguese Canadian seniors; and

“Camões House for the Aged and Portuguese Community Centre of Toronto is proposing a partnership with a local long-term-care provider to purchase up to 160 existing beds in the Toronto area (for a nominal fee) to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto. This partnership is tentative and is dependent on the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“We encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, his staff, and members of the Legislature to support the Camões proposal and to make the appropriate administrative and policy changes required to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto.”

Since I am in 100% agreement, I am delighted to sign this petition.

### HIGHWAY 35

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I have a petition.

“Highway 35 Four-Laning

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario's economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35, and that expansion has been put on hold by the McGuinty government; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton; and

“Whereas the final round of public consultation has just been rescheduled;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

It's signed by many citizens from my riding.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a very important petition here and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I wasn't quite ready for this, Mr. Speaker, but I appreciate your giving me the time. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

“Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

“Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

“Whereas Ontario is the only western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

“Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

“Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

“Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

“We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded.”

I gladly affix my signature to this petition.

1510

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise pursuant to

standing order 55. I want to give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, May 8, in the afternoon, we'll be debating second reading of Bill 107, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act; and in the evening, second reading of Bill 11, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act.

On Tuesday, May 9, in the afternoon, debate will continue with second reading of Bill 109, the Residential Tenancies Act; and that evening, second reading of Bill 102, the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act.

On Wednesday, May 10, in the afternoon, third reading of Bill 81, the Budget Measures Act; and in the evening, second reading once again of Bill 104, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act.

On Thursday, May 11, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 109, the Residential Tenancies Act.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GREATER TORONTO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LA RÉGIE DES TRANSPORTS DU GRAND TORONTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 1, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 104, An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and to repeal the GO Transit Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 104, Loi visant à créer la Régie des transports du grand Toronto et à abroger la Loi de 2001 sur le Réseau GO.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** For those of us in Mississauga, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority is part of a process that is the answer to many of our problems. For me especially, this is something that's very close to home. It is part of the new process that's going to get Mississauga its first new GO train station in 25 years, and that's in Lisgar, right in the riding that I represent.

An act like the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act is something that shows that the framework of laws is not monuments. Laws are meant to be changed; laws are meant to evolve with the times. One of the things that needs to change and evolve with the times is the notion of the silos in which public transit exists in what is currently the greater Toronto area. The GTTA, or the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, is going to be a comprehensive effort to break down a lot of those silos and enable the people who really need it to use transit to get from where they are to where they want to be seamlessly, with one fare, without worrying that when you get on Oakville transit, you have to transfer to Mississauga transit, you've got to take Mississauga

transit until you can transfer to the TTC, you have to take the TTC until you can get to the subway, and you have to take the subway to where you're going. It's absurd.

Those of us who have had the privilege of travelling to many of the world's great cities have seen many areas that did it right. In years past, people came to Toronto to look at how a transit system was done right. Toronto has lost its way for a while. The greater Toronto area is now going to find its way again through the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

Under the proposed model of the GTTA, its board—and the GTTA would in fact be responsible for purchasing public transit vehicles. That board brings together the province, the municipalities and the local transit authorities. Its representation is shared, it depends on consensus to make it work and it will get that consensus, because if there's one thing that everybody does agree on, it's that public transit is absolutely essential for a region that's among the fastest-growing in North America. I believe that only Houston is growing faster than the greater Toronto area. We're choking on our traffic. We have to get from where we are to where we need to be.

I remember that at one point the member from Willowdale had to make a trip out to my area of the woods in northwest Mississauga. He said, "You know, all those things I've heard you talk about in the Legislature, how difficult it is to get around: Now I understand what you were referring to, and you absolutely have my support on that." I say thank you to that. Those are some of the problems that the GTTA is there to address.

Just to show you one absurdity, let's suppose you start in Hamilton and you want to get to Markham. How would you do it? For all practical purposes, about the only way to do it is to go into Toronto, transfer in Toronto and then go north to Markham. It's the same in Mississauga. You have to go into Toronto, hub-and-spoke style, and then transfer to go north. Now, this is one thing if what you're doing is flying freight from one place to a hub and then outward to the various spokes, but people are not freight. What people want is to get seamlessly, in a cost-effective, timely manner, from where they are to where they need to be, by the most direct method. So if somebody wants to start in Hamilton or Stoney Creek or Ancaster and get to Markham, we want them to be able to take the shortest possible route, whether that be a busway parallel to Highway 7 or a GO train.

At the moment, we don't have GO train service across the top of Toronto, linking the areas where growth is taking place most rapidly. In my city of Mississauga, we are now at about 680,000 people, and within the foreseeable future we're going to be a little over 800,000 people. Brampton is growing to more than 500,000 people, and all the municipalities in York region are also growing very rapidly. We do commerce with each other. We don't necessarily do our commerce by going through Toronto. We need to get from where we are in the areas around the GTA to other areas around the GTA without



connecting in Toronto. That's some of the reality that didn't exist a decade and a half ago, but it exists now. That's why we need the structure the GTTA proposes, to punch through those regional silos, to enable us to do the right thing, for the right reasons, in the right way, to enable us to do it quickly, and to enable us to connect people and allow them to get from where they live to where they work.

Mississauga, for example, imports 2,000 more commuters per day than it exports. People now commute from Toronto, which we're beginning to think of as a suburb of Mississauga, into Mississauga to go to work. The same is true of the other growing and vibrant municipalities around Toronto, whether that be Brampton, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham or Aurora. They are all bringing in people for different reasons. People need to get from where they are to where they work, and in order to do so, rather than drive, we need more people to get on public transit and be able to connect seamlessly using public transit.

What are some of the good examples in recent years? I remember taking the Washington Metro last year. I was very surprised, with the growth in the city of Washington, DC, how far the Metro went. The Metro takes you right out into Maryland. You can get on the Metro in Maryland and travel right into Metro Washington. They've built it and built it and built it.

I look at the city where I was born and raised: Montreal. Toronto built the first subway line in the 1950s, built the Bloor line in the 1960s, then inexplicably stopped until the Spadina line was built in the 1970s, and then stopped. Rather than the fits-and-starts development, Montreal just kept building the Metro. Every year they would dig and build and dig and build, and now the Metro in Montreal goes just about everywhere.

That's what we need our public transit to do here in the greater Toronto area. Our public transit has got to be able to take people who shouldn't drive a car, don't need to drive a car, don't want to drive a car, and get them from where they live to where they work. There are many areas in which people work where it's very expensive to live, and part of the reason some of the jobs are not filled is because some of the people who could fill those jobs say, "I'm interested in that work, I could come here to work, I could fill this job, but there's no transit to get me from where I live, and either I don't want to have a car or I can't afford to have a car, so I can't come here to work."

Some of our firms in Mississauga are saying that that's one of the reasons we're having trouble attracting good-quality people to work here, because they cannot punch through those regional silos. It takes hours and hours if what you're going to do is connect from one bus to another and pay again when you cross the boundary from one transit system to another.

Among the other things the GTTA will do is coordinate fares. Our new Lisgar station will be the first example in which people will be able to pay one fare, get on the GO train and continue with that same fare when they

connect to the subway in Toronto. That's something we need to do here. We've got to look at our buses, our streetcars, our subways and our GO Transit as one seamless system in which you can get off one mode of transport at a connection point, transfer, and get on the other one. Whether it be that you swipe your card as you go in and swipe it again as you go out, which is what happens in Hong Kong, which is definitely a system to emulate—it's just a beautiful system there—there's no reason we can't adopt the best practices the world over and put them to work here in the greater Toronto area. That's what this act is going to enable Ontario to do.

1520

The government is making the largest investment in public transit in more than a decade, with \$1.3 billion this year alone. That means municipalities are able to purchase new buses, hire new drivers and add new routes. The provincial gas tax program has increased ridership already by 3.4% all across Ontario. What does 3.4% mean? Jeez, it sounds like a small number. What it does is eliminate 18 million car trips every year. That's 18 million people throughout the year who are not on the road going, inch by inch, ahead of you.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** What's that in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions?

**Mr. Delaney:** It's probably staggering in terms of the CO<sub>2</sub> and the nitrogen oxide emissions that are not going to take place.

We're going to have a lot of growth in the GTA. We expect to add nearly four million people here over the next 10 to 12 years. We have got to meet that challenge of population growth by enabling the people who look at the quality of life here in the greater Toronto area and say, "That's for me. Canada is the best country in the world. Ontario is the best place in the best country in the world, and the greater Toronto area is the best place to live, to work, to build a business and to raise a family." That's what this bill does. That's why I support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** This is an interesting bill that we're discussing today. The Greater Toronto Transportation Authority has been talked about for some time, particularly by this government. In fact, I think it's been announced several times as well. I think it was announced in two throne speeches over the last two years. This government is very big on making announcements. The announcements they make don't always come to fruition, but they certainly announce a lot.

I remember when the police officers were announced. I think it was announced seven different times that 1,000 new police officers were going to be hired in the province of Ontario. Then, over the crime spree that we had and the shooting spree, the gun problems in Toronto—and across Ontario, for that matter—over the last couple of months in 2005, there were, in fact, 40 new police officers hired. I think that's still a long way from 1,000. I don't think they've reached that 1,000 point yet. Here we are, with the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority,



and it's the fourth announcement—this could be the fifth announcement, I suppose, that this program is going to roll out.

What is rolling out is perhaps just a little disappointing, because this particular piece of legislation doesn't have a lot of clout to get anything done. They're going to be consulting, they're going to be asking questions, they're going to be suggesting different places that they can go, they are going to be making comment, but it doesn't sound like they're going to be doing very much at all.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I wanted to make a few comments on the remarks made by the member from Mississauga West. Although I agree with a lot of the theory that the member was talking about in terms of getting people out of their cars and onto public transit systems because of environmental concerns and the simple fact that that's the future for any progressive, forward-moving society such as ours, one of the things that the member fails to acknowledge is the criticisms that have come forward with regard to this bill, particularly around how we're going to adequately finance and provide the necessary resources for this particular authority to be more than just, as our critic called it, an empty vessel. That's certainly one of our concerns.

In fact, people may be aware that the Toronto Board of Trade had some quite stinging comments to make about the GTTA, and I thought I would share them with you this afternoon. Glen Grunwald from the Toronto Board of Trade stated, "We're concerned by the lack of strong financial tools that will provide sustainable revenue. The authority will need sufficient funds to tackle major projects and create partnerships. The last thing we want ... is a great car that doesn't have enough gas in the tank." It's quite interesting when the Toronto Board of Trade is coming out with some concerns. Those are some of the same concerns that we've identified, not only the lack of financial tools but the lack of real clout that this organization is going to have.

The last thing we want is another group of people sitting around talking about things; we want to see some real action. Although the member in his remarks did speak about the common card that's going to be able to be used across systems, they make it sound like it's going to happen sometime soon. It's not even scheduled to happen for some 10 years down the road. We need more and quicker action in this regard.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I'm pleased to have a few moments to remark on the fine speech from the member for Mississauga West. He has mentioned concerns in Mississauga and how they're able to now move from that area into Hamilton, all the way over eastward into Scarborough and northward as well.

One key thing to think about here is that people who ride the subway, who ride the GO trains, don't see boundaries; they don't see the fact that they're exiting Toronto and now entering Mississauga, or exiting Scarborough and going into Markham now. They just want to be able to go from point A to point B. If they're

living in south Scarborough, let's say, in Scarborough Southwest, my riding, and want to get through Scarborough perhaps into parts of my colleague Mr. Balkissoon's riding, which is Scarborough—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River):** Rouge River.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** —Rouge River—thank you—and into areas of Markham, a destination up there, they should be able to do so without having to get off one bus and onto another bus or pay for a separate ticket. Right now, we've got all these different ticket fares and ticketing systems. It's time to put this together.

I applaud the government for finally bringing this thing forward and debating it, as we are today, and hopefully bringing it into existence as soon as possible. The people who use transit have to have a change in mindset—I know that the member from Mississauga West spoke of this—so that you can get around to different parts of the GTA. Commuters don't necessarily see Steeles as a boundary anymore, or other parts that are divided up; they just want to get from point A to point B, and to do so as easily as possible. This bill does that. I support it and I applaud the member from Mississauga West for his comments earlier.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm looking forward to the opportunity to speak to this bill during debate, following the lead from our critic, Mr. O'Toole.

In one sense, this bill is in fact a recognition of the previous government's initiatives in the area of transportation and transit. Whether it be the concept of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, whether it be the concept of the smart card and the seamless transit card, these were all initiatives that the previous government began to develop. In that sense, there is a complement here to the previous government's initiatives, and we welcome that.

I will have some comments to make about where I feel there are significant weaknesses in this legislation. Specifically with regard to the structure of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, my concern is that we may well end up where the GTSB was, which we all know was a very dysfunctional organization, and the reason for that was because of its structure. There was a great deal of parochialism. Representatives from various municipalities, rather than seeing the big picture, began lobbying, if you will, for their own self-interest. For that reason, I believe that we have a faulty structure here, and I look forward to providing my comments further during debate.

1530

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for oral response. The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga West.

**Mr. Delaney:** I want to thank my colleagues from Halton, Hamilton East, Scarborough Southwest and Oak Ridges for their comments.

The member for Halton says that announcements we make don't usually come to fruition. I certainly expect to see him parking his car at Lisgar beginning next summer and see what fruition is in fact all about.



The member for Hamilton East agrees with us, in that structures like the GTTA are the solution to the GTA's legendary gridlock. Although she asserts that the fare card system would take 10 years to develop, in fact, the fare card will begin in 2007 in my station of Lisgar in Mississauga West and will be implemented system-wide by 2010.

I thank my colleague from Scarborough Southwest. He points out that people just want to get from point A to point B. To those of us on the periphery of Toronto, there is indeed life beyond King and Bay and we'd just like to be able to get there. He talks about Steeles as a boundary. In fact, we all know that Steeles is just another choked road with traffic on it.

My always elegant and sartorial colleague from Oak Ridges talked about certain parts of the bill, and if he wants to claim credit for parts of it, he's welcome to. To us, good ideas don't come wrapped in ideology. We just want to get the job done so that people can move around.

That's the essence of this bill on the GTTA. It's about getting the job done. It's about helping people get from where they are to where they need to be. That's the real value to the nearly 12.5 million people who will live in the area that it serves. That means that the amount of time people will spend stuck in traffic won't end up increasing by four times, which it would in the absence of the GTTA.

I thank my colleagues for their comments and I look forward to their support.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time for further debate.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I know the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford would be anxious to comment on being included in this GTTA bill.

I think for the viewer and those listening today, it is also worth noting at the beginning, following the member for Oak Ridges, who served for some time in the role of Minister of Transportation for the province of Ontario, that many of the comments I will make today will respond to the work that he did in his time there, which would include many of the ongoing announcements being made by Minister Takhar to this day. But it will take some time to get to the point.

The essence here this afternoon is Bill 104. I think the very title of the bill leads me to be quite suspect of its real intentions, in both real policy and real politics. They did make, as we all know, a promise during the election. They made a number of promises, and that's a debate that's been carried on here since the election occurred—getting them to keep at least one or two of these promises, not the least of which is to not raise your taxes. They've broken pretty well everything in that case.

On Bill 104, the title gives it all away. It says, "An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and to repeal the GO Transit Act." It does use the word "transportation," but if you look in this entire little shell of a bill, you'll find in the 26 pages, which would be 13 pages in English, that this is all about transit; it's not about transportation. Transportation is the major issue

here, how it affects our quality of life and the quality of our economy.

In fact, our leader, John Tory, has commissioned me to do a lot of work, along with the other members of our caucus, many of whom are still here. We've initiated our initial document, called the gridlock task force. The work on that task force report will serve as a very important reference point going forward, not just in the role as opposition critic for transportation but also regarding what the plan for the future is, which brings me back to Bill 104. The plan for the future in Bill 104 is anything but a plan. I will get to the detail of the bill; I'm sort of setting it up here because there are, quite frankly, four or five key principles that I think are important to put on the record initially.

(1) This is proof of the lack of a plan. The GTTA was an election promise and was reannounced a number of times during their speeches almost from the beginning, and three years later they finally have Bill 104, what I refer to as the shell bill.

(2) An integrated transit card, in the bill referred to as a so-called smart card, is not planned or will not be implemented until at least, as a minimum, 2010. Certainly, it's my hope and the hope of our leader, John Tory, that we will have a plan that will bring it in right away. Their plan is for 2010. Like a lot of things, it's post-dated. In fact, the \$600-plus million in the budget is post-election spending. It's almost starting to sound like Ottawa's plan when Paul Martin was running the ship.

(3) This item is very important; people need to reflect on this: The GTTA role is advisory, not operational. I'll talk to the governance model, which is in one of the sections, that proves that it is dysfunctional. It is designed to be dysfunctional. Ultimately, without being critical, it has no real authority.

(4) I can refer to their budget, I can refer to everything in this bill—it's going to be signed by either Dalton McGuinty or Minister Takhar, if he's still in that role, which is another question for another day, actually.

(5) Business and municipal leaders in the GTA such as Hazel McCallion and Glen Grunwald, president of the Toronto Board of Trade, have expressed concerns over the effectiveness of the GTTA in the form proposed in this bill.

These are the five principles that are being echoed. This may not be the most important debate for Ontario citizens; they're probably very concerned about Bill 102, which is really going to impact their access to medications, which our critic, Elizabeth Witmer, has spoken to and is very much engaged in. But quite honestly, the media is paying some attention to this part of this bill; I just hope the viewers are. What it means to the citizen, like myself and/or my constituents in the riding of Durham or indeed all Ontarians in the GTA who are affected by this, is—this week I have been taking GO Transit. So I renewed. I buy my weekly 10-trip ticket, and it's in the order of around \$70 for 10 trips, which is a business week, five days in and out. Then I have to take the TTC. The TTC is roughly \$5, a little over \$5 to come



up to Queen's Park and to go back. So when you look at it, it's roughly \$5 a day for five days. So it's \$100 a week. Let's just round things off quite comfortably. It's \$100 a week, and if you work 50 weeks of the year, that's \$5,000.

Stop and think. They were harshly critical of the move made by Prime Minister Harper and Jim Flaherty—he and I used to take the GO Transit together because his riding was in the Whitby–Ajax area. How this actually came to my attention, this whole idea of the transit tax credit—which is not something in this bill, and it's disappointing. I've asked the minister to address it. Perhaps there will be public hearings and perhaps he'll do the right thing. But you really can't trust many of the promises sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps your spouse works in Toronto as well. In my case, many young families move to Durham; it's a great place to live. If there are two of them, they're each spending \$5,000. That's \$10,000 a year. Let stop here. The numbers are getting so big. You've got to first of all recognize—does this do anything to make transit affordable for hard-working people? At \$10,000—that means they have to make \$20,000 in their gross income to get the \$10,000 to spend, and that's just getting to work. This bill does nothing for the absolute consumer at the end of the day, the rider. I don't see anything in this which is a disincentive to the transit tax credit idea to move people from their cars into public transit, which would affect the economy and environment. In fact, it would affect the gridlock debate that's been raging for some time.

1540

I'm going to refer to the media, so these are third-party commentaries that I'll be referring to. In that sense, I'm going to use the most objective kind of reporting I can get my hands on—well, at least it's certainly not supportive of the Conservative perspective. I think the best one, at the very start, right after Minister Takhar introduced this, was by Ian Urquhart in the *Toronto Star*, April 26, and for the record, this bill was introduced on April 24, so he took the time to read it and analyze it. Basically, it's a pretty significant article. It's on, "Many Questions Surround New Transit Agency." It's a fairly neutral headline, but he goes on to say a couple of things here. "GTTA"—the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority; it's not a transit bill, but it is; that's the treachery of the title, technically—"will bring ... together with municipalities to develop a seamless and integrated transportation plan for road, rail and transit," he declared." Well, seamless and integrated? Our leader has spoken on this quite passionately in our discussions on the gridlock issue. As many members here would agree, the need to integrate transit, the need to have it seamless so that it's more convenient—and the missing part of the Liberal plan, of course, is "affordable." They'd probably like to raise the fees to pay for this new bureaucracy they've created, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, which actually has no power. It's sort of like the LHINs in health care. It's another bureau-

cracy costing millions of dollars that will do nothing to help children with autism or children who are diabetic or make drugs more affordable. It will cost more. The argument is it's going to cost a lot.

I'm going to cite a number of things that Ian Urquhart said in this article: "The bill directs the GTTA 'to provide leadership in the coordination, planning' ... of transportation routes in the region." Look at the soft words. See the introduction of these. I'll just repeat them, because it's important. "Leadership." What precisely is that? If you look at the governance model, which I'll speak to, the leadership is actually Dalton and Takhar, because all of the approvals go through orders in council, even their budget.

Clearly, most of the commentaries—I'll go on here, because it's in sync with what I'm saying: "The authority"—and this is a quote—"will need sufficient funds to tackle major projects and create partnerships." I would agree with that. "The last thing we want to end up with is a great car that doesn't have enough gas in the tank." They've got the vehicle, so to speak, but there's no gas in the tank. In fact, it's contributing to gridlock. In fact, this thing here is nothing but a shell that's going to be obfuscating the real debate about integrating seamless transit to make it affordable, to address congestion, gridlock, the economy and the environment.

He goes on to say, "But Takhar also hinted that the GTTA might eventually"—two soft words—"get access to federal gasoline tax revenue." Well, there they are. They flipped it over to the feds now to say that if it's going to do anything, Stephen Harper's responsible. These aren't written by our policy research people, nor myself.

I'm going to go on, because here's another article. I've used the most neutral commentaries I could find. The *Toronto Star* again, and this article is May 1, so it's fairly current. Its title is starting to tell the true story: "Not Quite the Ticket." If you go through this, you'll find they've really hit the nail. They've figured out that it is, as I said, an empty shell. You open it up, the 26 pages of blah, blah, blah. I hate to use that kind of trite expression, but it says, "In the 2003 election, Premier Dalton McGuinty promised to deliver such an agency, one with 'the clout and resources to tackle gridlock.'" There's nothing whatsoever in this bill. This, again, is an article from the *Star*—I've got to remind myself sometimes.

"Sadly, this new authority has no clout and few resources." This isn't our briefing note; this is the public media commenting on something.

It says, "It also has no money to put toward needed transit projects and no power to collect taxes."

There you are. Don't take my word for it. Members, backbenchers especially, should pay attention. This is going to do absolutely nothing for anyone and it's a tragedy, because I would support it if it had the proper governance and resources to start with.

Here's another one. This is again from the *Toronto Star*. I'm trying to stay neutral. It's hard sometimes. I think the *Star* is starting to see the real Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Really, quite frankly, they're supposed



to endorse these public policies from McGuinty. They certainly endorsed him during the election; that's for sure. And perhaps they should. That's a debate for another day.

This article is quite good, actually, because it relates not just to the GTA generally, which goes from Halton—my good friend Ted Chudleigh from Halton and I are sort of the bookends of the GTA. We see the growth areas and the pressures on the growth areas that are just inadequate under this government. They seem to think it's all in Toronto. They think David Miller is the Deputy Premier. That's the way I'm feeling here: sort of isolated, even though we are part of the GTA. I don't want to be too cruel, because the chief government whip is sitting on this side of the House, and that may be perhaps because of the convincing arguments I'm making today. I doubt it.

This one said, "Could Link Three Regions." This is something I'm putting on the table as a suggestion that I think deserves serious consideration. Certainly I'm reading it because I think it's an important comment. Who is it by? This article is by David Ryan, who's the mayor of Pickering, which is part of Durham region. He's the mayor, and his good friend Wayne Arthurs—Wayne probably wishes he still had that job, technically. He's underutilized and underappreciated here; there's no question of that. But Dave Ryan had some very good ideas. I see the minister has joined us. I'm flattered by that because perhaps there will be some connectivity here, and I'll be the first to support it. Good policy is good politics, Minister, and this isn't either. As this one currently stands, we need to do some serious work. I'm prepared to work with you on it, quite frankly, as is John Tory. This is our new democracy. Democratic renewal is going to start right here, right now today, on this bill.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** I think we're getting some support for that in the House.

Now, what's Dave saying here? "Interestingly, your newspaper has also detailed the undetermined future of the Scarborough RT"—rapid transit—"line. I think we have a golden opportunity here, which may also be our best and last chance to get it right." Very good, insightful observations by a relatively new mayor. "Would it make sense for the GTTA to devise a strategy that would see the enhancement of the Scarborough RT line and its extension into Pickering and the region of Durham, as well as Markham and the region of York?"

Now, think of this. This is quite visionary, actually. In fact, he'd make a good candidate as the new chair of Durham region. Who knows?

It goes on to say, "For example, the Scarborough RT line should be extended to the University of Toronto at Scarborough"—I'm very familiar with that campus; it's a growing and healthy campus; I spent time there—"and then proceed eastward to the future community of Seaton in Pickering...." That's part of Smart Growth and Places to Grow. I understand that and I support that.

"It could then progress eastward along Highway 407"—that's the intention: to integrate public transit in

the corridor of the 407. Minister, I endorse that here publicly. You can quote me on it. The public transit corridor should be an integral part of the 407—"into Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington to service hundreds of thousands of additional new residents, as well as the University of Ontario Institute of Technology ... Ontario's fastest-growing university."

What logic. You've got the universities, the technology, the human infrastructure and the physical infrastructure—that is, transit—to get people to and from in the future that we're envisioning. Certainly John Tory espouses that kind of integrated thinking to have an intelligent, forward-looking plan for the future of Ontario and the growth that we're all going to experience as part of being members of the GTA.

He goes on to say, "If we are to be successful, we need to put aside the old disengaged way of thinking in silos and implement a solution that addresses the health and sustainability of the entire GTA and not just what we want for our own individual communities." Speaking as a mayor, I think he's made a very profound observation which I believe deserves further attention.

#### **1550**

This is another recent article, again from the Toronto Star. These aren't my crib notes here. "This is a tax break for commuters." Minister Flaherty is well aware of the GTA and its issues. I think he's the lead minister federally to work with the mayor of Toronto, David Miller, as well as—well, David Miller, Dalton, same thing; they're actually just going for the Toronto votes, which is fine. I understand that. He says that if the finance minister "follows through today on a \$400-million-a-year election promise for transit users, commuters will find themselves with their first tax break for taking buses, streetcars or subways." That drives it right down to my initial remark. The transit system isn't about MTO or the TTC or GO Transit; it's about people getting to and from where they need to be, conveniently, on time and affordably. As I said this morning and today in my earlier comments, I pull out my TTC and my GO ticket and it's \$100 a week and going up. With the price of gas, insurance, liability, terrorism and other issues—you name it—it's going to cost more.

In the minister's capital budget, which I have a copy of here, it's about \$1 billion a year, and that's basically what it has been for some time. That's building more. If you build it, they will come. Building more roads may not be the only solution. I think we have to be innovative here, and part of that is having some consensus on public transit. It's important to recognize that that infrastructure is more sustainable in many ways—environmentally, economically and operationally, I would say—than repaving the highways every year.

On the record here now is this transit tax. In fact, I had a bill—and I'm just going to digress for a moment. I still think there's room. There may be a breath of fresh air back into the creature of a municipally or provincially originated transit tax credit. Bill 137 passed here in the House. All parties voted for it; a few people abstained. It



went to committee, and there were some public hearings. Respectfully, I thank the government and the minister for allowing it to go to committee, because they could have used their manipulative tools to avoid that, but they didn't. We heard clearly from the Canadian Urban Transit Association and others that there were some administrative issues with the bill: How do you get these receipts? How are these receipts verifiable? It integrates very nicely into the initiative the minister is taking on the seamless smart card thing. I think the smart card and the tracks thing should be part of it, because the overall objective here should be a measured benchmark of increased ridership, not the mileage of track used or otherwise. Increasing ridership on existing infrastructure is a very good place to start to demonstrate to the public in a public policy mode that public transit is here to stay and public transit needs to be supported.

In fact, arguably, most people here would know, whether it's the Bay Area Rapid Transit system or the London Underground—my daughter tells me that she and her husband take the underground every single day to go into the city of London. They have a perimeter tax there for getting into downtown London, England. Those are some of the solutions the minister may have to address. But transit is widely used there. I've been there several times myself, and I would say it's functional and it's got the density that makes transit work.

You can't have buses driving around concession roads, as they are today, to pump up the numbers so they get more of the gas tax. It just doesn't make sense. Big 60-passenger buses roaming down the concession roads doesn't make any sense at all to me. I see Jeff Leal of Peterborough. I look at the buses in Peterborough and they're empty half the time.

**Mr. Leal:** No, transit is up.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Half the time, Jeff. Pay attention. It's a whole debate. I understand that. I'm just trying to make balanced discussion work here. I'm bringing up the idea of making it affordable so people will make the move.

We don't quite have the density of a San Francisco, a New York City or a London, England. But Toronto does and the GTA does and will, and we're early enough, as Dave Ryan said, to get it right.

That's kind of a simple media scan of what the response has been. They basically are saying that he's out of gas and there's no compass in the car; it's just sort of randomly driving around and perhaps just wasting time.

I'll get back to the bill. The bill says it's all about transit; it's not about transportation. If the viewer at home wants to find out, you can call me or e-mail me; there's a website. We have a discussion paper out on gridlock, which addresses a lot of issues, including transit, the environment, infrastructure and partnering with all levels of government. I may get to it in the limited time I have left.

I think the viewer should read the five or six sections that are critical. The sections that I need to refer to and put on the record: The governance model is the very beginning. It's problematic. It's structurally dysfunctional.

That's in section 9, for those who want a copy of this or pay attention as we move along. Again, in the purpose clause you get all these soft, fuzzy kind of motherhood things: The duties of the directors are to promote, facilitate and coordinate. That's almost like saying, "Phone the minister and he'll tell you what to do," and he's probably capable of doing that. I'm sure he will, because most of the authority comes from cabinet and orders in council. As a matter of fact, it starts right at the very genesis. The governance model is a puppet for the minister. The two people with complete control—guess what? I'll read it here. It's section 9, under "Board of directors." "The business and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its board of directors."

Here's the composition. It's really interesting: "two persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister;"

They're some of his friends, probably some of his fundraisers or something. It could be. Hopefully they're going to be quality people. But they're going to be political appointments, I'm telling you right now. The minister will call them, maybe at his business or at his home—who knows?—and just tell them what he needs. They're the chair and the vice-chair. That's the part.

Here's the other precarious balance. You'll find this because there's no member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford on here. Are you willing to take the challenge yourself?

Anyway, it goes on here and says, "the following persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council"—here it is. These are the following members of an 11-member board; I think it's 11 members: There are four from the city of Toronto. In terms of pure numbers, volume, revenue and expenditures, there's no question it should be Toronto, and that's the debate here. Glen Grunwald would probably agree. He's the president of the board of trade, who really has driven this initiative. I give him credit as well. That's the governance issue: Is Toronto going to run it? If they do, all of the other regions, including York, Durham, Peel—I believe that Hamilton will be in here. So you've got Halton, York, Durham and the other areas.

Toronto has four. So now we've got two from the government, four from Toronto, one person from Hamilton, one from Durham region, one person from Halton, one person from Peel and one person from York. So basically you've got five people from the surrounding GTA and four from Toronto, so Toronto can't run it, and unless all the regions agree, they can't win either. Then you have the chair and the vice-chair, who have the deciding vote, technically, so they run it. If you look at this governance model, who runs it? In fact the minister runs it. He just tells these people, "Here's the answer"—not the question; "Here's the answer." They call him with the questions.

That's the governance provision, which is section 9. I encourage the reader to review it. I'm quite open to commentary on it.

Section 16 is quite interesting too. Now we're getting into a bit of what I'd call the glue of the bill. Section 16



is also worth a cursory review. It's the powers, and this is quite interesting because it says:

"(1) Except as limited by this act," which is really the essence of it all, "the corporation has the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person...."

"(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1)...."

"(a) to hold, manage, operate, fund and deliver any local transit system or other transportation service within the regional transportation area by agreement"—that's the key—"to be served by the system...." and/or the agreement to hold, operate, fund. That's basically what it says.

It goes on in "Limitation re subsidiaries," in section 17, to say, "The corporation may establish ... corporations in or outside Ontario subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council," which is the short term for the Premier. So there it is. He has to sign off on that.

Under "Agreements," it's the same thing, which is section 19. It says, "Where the corporation enters into an agreement with a person in a jurisdiction outside of Ontario, it may, in respect of such agreement and with the approval of the Minister of Finance, waive any immunity outside of Ontario...." So the Ministry of Finance runs that. There's no agreement that it's going to have what I would call the credit-worthiness, which would probably be the legal term, to actually establish capital and operating agreements.

1600

Actually, if you want to get into financial matters, here is another important part. It's section 24—page 13 of the bill, for those following along. It says:

"Budget and other financial information

"24(1) On or before August 31 in each year, or another date specified by the minister"—there he is again, giving them a phone call—"the corporation shall submit its budget for the following fiscal year, or for any other period of time specified by the minister"—there he is, telling them when, where, why and how, now—"to the minister for his ... approval." He's got complete approval, absolute signoff; no question. There is no power; there is no money.

We've got it here. Section 24: Read it. It's worth paying attention to, because it's what the papers are saying. They finally found out. I've talked to some of them: There's no question. I obviously haven't had any role in what their opinions are. I, as the critic, must be accountable to the public in whatever form it is.

It says:

"Additional Information

"(3) The corporation shall give the minister additional financial information as the minister may at any time request." He's going to call them and tell them, "This is the information you need to know." It really goes on and on.

Subsection 31(1):

"Provincial funding of corporation and subsidiaries

"31(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may raise by way of loan in the manner provided by the Financial Administration Act such sums as the Lieutenant Gover-

nor in Council considers necessary for the purposes of this Act." There we have the cabinet minister saying, "Thou shalt borrow, loan, debenture," whatever.

It goes on to subsection 31(2):

"(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order authorize the Minister of Finance to make loans to the corporation or to any" subsidiaries, "including loans of the sums raised under subsection (1), on the terms and conditions that the Minister of Finance may determine."

They have complete control. I wouldn't be surprised if some world-class people look at this and say, "Gee, I'm just a puppet." If they take it on, it's probably because there will be a fairly significant stipend for it. I hope that's going to be publicly disclosed as well. An appropriate amount would be similar to what members here make. Members here make around \$90,000, unless you're a minister; you make almost double. Well, they don't make enough, either. I'll be honest with that. Given the work that you take and the criticism you take, there would be an argument for that. But the directors shouldn't make more than the MPPs, that's for sure. I mean, we're often told what to do as well, as the minister will be telling these directors what to do.

Accountability: This is really important. "Transparency" and "accountability" are fancy words that lack actual substance today. This is about ministerial directives; this is good. The minister's actually paying attention to this, which is encouraging. He probably hasn't read it.

"32(1) The minister may issue directives in writing to the corporation in respect of any matter under this act"—and I'm certain he will.

We talked about the Greater Toronto Services Board itself being dysfunctional. Our critic of education and former finance minister, Frank Klees, the member from Oak Ridges, knows full well—we're admitting it now—that the services board, for a lot of reasons, couldn't get along. Maybe they had too many functional responsibilities. Operationally they couldn't connect the dots because nobody from Halton to Durham would agree with what day it was, let alone giving up some of their autonomy and power. That's the sad part: In Bill 81, in schedule H, they slipped in this thing so that they're going to have a four-year term now. So you've got four years of dysfunctionality, which is not at their level, but in trying to get the municipalities to coordinate, I think the minister needs more power here through this board.

**Mr. Delaney:** I hear a point of order coming, John.

**Mr. O'Toole:** A point of order on this bill, from the member from Mississauga, Hazel McCallion's member, I believe. He worked directly for her, at least.

I would say that regulations are always quoted as an important part of the bill. You need to pay careful attention to section 42, regulations. Here's the deal: The regulations are basically the ultimate working document. This bill is a framework document. Much of it is controlled through directions by the minister, which may be appropriate for a new organization; I will give some room on this. But in the regulations, where you actually get the



detailed mechanics of how this thing will work, section 42(1) says, "The minister may make regulations...." There you have it: He makes them all. He sets the rules, he pays the bills, he tells them what to do. You've got way too much power here, Minister. I think you should get a raise if you're going to be running all this stuff and it's actually going to work.

It says here the minister may prescribe "the area that comprises the GO Transit service area;" prescribe "additional areas...." I hope it includes Barrie. At some point in time Barrie is going to have to fit into this for sure. There is no question about it.

It goes on in clause 42(1)(e), "prescribing other matters to be addressed and other information to be included in the Corporation's transportation plan....

"(f) prescribing classes of bylaws....

"(g) prescribing additional powers....

"(h) prescribing the circumstances....

"(i) prescribing purposes....

"(j) prescribing additional matters....

He's going to be almost like a pharmacist here. He'll be writing out prescriptions all the time.

"(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

"(a) prescribing additional objects and duties of the corporation;

"(b) respecting revenue raising and financing opportunities for the corporation;"

Probably the only thing it does here, quite frankly, and this is a matter of principle—perhaps the minister will respond to this one.

Section 43 is called "Dissolution of GO Transit." GO Transit: I will have a bit of time to go into what we did and what some of our record is on this file.

"Members terminated" is section 43.

"The terms of office of the members of GO Transit who are in office immediately before its dissolution are terminated on the day of the dissolution." What this means is that most of those logistics people—coordinating, communications and experts in those areas—are going to be fired and they're going to be rehired the next day and they'll change the thing from "GO Transit" on their uniform to "GTTA." They'll get a severance package. I want to know how much that severance package is. It is not their fault. It's the minister's method or mechanics of doing it.

Can you imagine that? These people who work for GO Transit are going to get a severance package and a new uniform with a new badge on it. I'm surprised. The scrutiny needs to be tightened on this. We need to do some work on Bill 104. It's going nowhere, except that the government is in control. In fact, I say with some sadness that they'll probably force it through without proper hearing or proper debate. It's discouraging. As a member who serves 10 or 12 years, the severances are—

**Mr. Chudleigh:** How much will the severances cost?

**Mr. O'Toole:** The severances are—when they took away—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I've got to recognize the member from Halton. He just interjected and Hansard will get this. What he suggested is, what's the severance going to be? I have no idea, but it's always too much.

Now here's the deal: The only reference I have on this is when they dissolve under the new LHINs, the local health integrated networks—this is Bill 36. This needs to be part of the public record. The people working for the district health council, God bless them, probably are analysts and health scientists and are doing great work. Fired. The problem is that they were hired back the next day. They got the severance package and probably got double the salary. Some of them are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** No. Not more then us.

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock has a great history working as a professional nurse in health care in many jurisdictions, including Ontario, and does a wonderful job. Her caring attitude—I saw it last night, actually, in terms of her compassion and reaching out just to be with others.

On a serious level, they actually got a severance. That sets the template for the way Dalton is doing it. They are doing it with the nurses; they're doing it with the LHINs; they're doing it here. I can only say to you that Bill 104 hardly deserves the time to go to committee. It should just be—one of the members the other day used one of those dramatic things. What he did was—pardon me, Mr. Speaker—he went rip.

Quite frankly that's what should happen. They should start again. This bill has nothing in it. I've got the Toronto Star and the minister's briefing notes; they say it. The bill itself says it, if you read it. There's no plan in here; there's no money. There's no plan and there are no smart cards coming any time soon.

Our suggestion here, Minister, if we could just settle down and stop some of the theatrics—I mean on my part—is to say this: We want to work with you on this. Our leader has given us clear directions that yes, we need seamless integrated transit for all the right reasons. We do need that. All we need here is to sort of start again. The need to work on consensus building is absent here, and I find that even Hazel McCallion has now gotten suspicions. When she's against you, you're finished. If she doesn't like this, you can cancel it. I think your minister was involved in giving her a fine the other day.

1610

**Mr. Leal:** No.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Yes. She got a fine for something or other. It would be the Highway Traffic Act; that's your job. She got a fine. I think it was \$110 or something like that.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** It was \$115.

**Mr. O'Toole:** She could probably expense it, I suppose. Anyway, we are digressing.

In respect, I do want to go back to establish a few things. I probably shouldn't be doing this; I've not been a



cabinet minister. After 11 years, I've been a member of cabinet committees. It was a privilege to do that work, and I'd do it for less money, to be quite frank with you. I think it's important work.

This is a confidential document on the SuperBuild Ontario transit renewal program. It's dated November 2, 2005. It's a cabinet document. It's labelled, "Confidential for internal discussion only." I have that one. This thing here does operate what the member from Oak Ridges said. I think the Ministry of Transportation people and the new deputy minister—she was before public accounts the other day, and I made a public statement that I commended her leadership, working with some very, very skilled people. I have the greatest respect for MTO and the work they do at an operational level—no question. They've helped me in my riding of Durham numerous times, so this isn't meant to be criticism.

In fact, the continuum here, if you really face the facts—we don't like to say this, but here's how it actually works. There are about five phases over 10 years to get some idea, a concept, into law. You've got the conceptualization, the consultation, the drafting, the debate and the regulations. It's about 10 years from concept to implementation. Let's be honest; it really is. I've been elected since 1982—not here all the time; I've been in different functions, I suppose—but I've always paid attention, because I believe leadership from the province is critical, whether it's in education, health care, you name it.

Here's another document. Again, it's labelled "Classified," but around here we call it a leaked cabinet document. These are old, but the reason I brought them out of hiding—not hiding, but into the public forum here today. This is actually the minister's briefing notes. If you'd lend me that book, I won't tell a soul: the one you use to give us all the answers, the one that staff write for you. I know how it works; I think that's important. You've got to stay on message and blah blah blah.

But here's the thing: In this document, you were proud to announce—and I commend you for it. The only thing is, you should have had Frank Klees with you. If you look at the ministry documents and the estimates process, those HOV lanes were in our budget. You were there for the ribbon cutting, and that's good. Thank you for doing it, but you should have had Frank Klees there with you. But that's the way politics works.

I'd say that the evidence of good government is the continuum and the building and the moving forward stuff, but we often have to withstand a torrent of criticism, some of it earned, some of it completely unfounded. When they say it without knowledge, sometimes it's hard to refute that. In the very limited time I've been given today, I'm going to attempt to refute some of the misinformation that's been perpetrated on the people of Ontario.

Again, this is a confidential document on the capital plan for 2003. Here's the deal: "Transit capital." Here it is, right in the writing, and I'm reading it. I guess I can give it to Hansard. They're part of the permanent staff here, so they don't get involved in politics, fortunately.

Federal transit assistance, \$14 million; transit renewal, \$109 million; GO Transit base capital, \$93.6 million; TIPS and GTIP, \$105 million. This goes on in some detail to explain the programs within each of those.

Part of the transit initiative was a "\$9-billion investment over 10 years to renew and expand transit," starting with \$3.25 billion in provincial funding.

"Aligning investments with Smart Growth/regional transportation directions." Smart Growth; they call it Places to Grow. Who cares? It's a different name; same plan. The ministry people are moving forward, and the politicians get in the way most of the time.

Transit renewal: "Renew aging Ontario bus fleet through replacement and refurbishment."

GO Transit capital base needed to maintain \$2 billion in assets; seeking federal matching funds for several projects, like working on Union Station.

They're still working on it. In fact, the consultants just resigned from that project of trying to find that destination plan. Whether it's a partnership plan, a privatization plan, or it's the city of Toronto that owns it, it's hard to say, but they're still working on it. In fact, the consultants just quit. The reason they quit is because nobody wants to invest. That's the deal.

There are a lot of documents here, and I want to go on. It says, "The capital plan"—I would say, quite frankly, there is new money in the past budget, this current budget that was announced a few months ago. It seems like a long time ago. I'm still getting over the health tax. Holy smoke; I just did my income tax. For my family, it was like two grand. I don't mind paying more, but am I getting anything for it? I'm paying more and getting less. That how I feel. Sometimes these expressions come to mind so easily. I don't mind paying more. If I go to a ball game and I pay more, I usually get a better seat. Do you understand? It's a choice I make. I can pay less and sit on the wall. Do you understand? I can pay nothing and watch it on television. So these are about choices. There are no choices with the health tax. The waiting lists are getting longer. It's frightening. I don't know if they can last until 2007. This is my worry, that there is going to be a revolt—not by me; I won't participate in things like that.

With this bill, technically the intentions are there but it's hollow. As Ian Urquhart said, they've run out of gas, which is another way, a very trite way, a comical way, of saying they have no plan, no vision and no intention of completing it. But some of these initiatives the minister announced will come to pass, and I think, whether it's the York-Spadina or whatever subway is built ultimately—the fact that Greg Sorbara announced that early is something members shouldn't do with their privileged information. They take the oath. You should be quiet on that stuff. Greg's a smart guy. I think he does a great job. He will probably be back in cabinet when Gerard resigns, but then again, Gerard probably won't resign, because he won't win as leader and he hasn't got a job. That's a question for another day. Probably Howard will ask that next week, because we're wondering what he's doing.



He's getting paid—so are we. He's getting paid, and he's a special adviser to the Premier, as I understand it, which probably means he is getting his cabinet salary. He'll be back. He will probably be the Minister of Transportation when he comes back, because he has left education in turmoil. In fact, they're all in deficit. It's tragic, actually.

The major highway projects: I always pay attention to the detail in these ministerial documents. I wish I had more of them. I would say that when you look at the capital projects, not just in my riding, the 416 was approved under our government. The HOV lanes were approved and funded in the budget. They may not have been completed. These projects happen between and through and past elections, but it's the vision that was there under co-ordinated transit. So working together with the minister is very important.

There's a whole list of issues here on rehabilitation projects. The billion dollars gets spent, and I'm sure the minister will recognize that within the Durham region, the completion, I would say, in fairness—and this is part of this bill, because it's a transportation bill. It's not just a transit bill, although it is that. You shouldn't have changed that name, the Greater Toronto Transit Authority. It's not the "transportation" authority. It has nothing to do with transportation, technically. I will put an amendment through for that: unanimous consent to amend the title of the bill.

**Interjection:** All right.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Okay? Do we have that?

**Mr. Berardinetti:** No.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Somebody said no. The Liberals are against even changing the name. So what is the sense of debating this, because it is sort of a *fait accompli*?

The point that needs to be put on the record here—there are some other points. The minister should make a commitment here, I think, to say we're going to do it. Tell them. You have the authority in the bill to tell them that Howard Moscoe doesn't run the TTC and get the money for nothing. Give them the gas money and say, "Get that smart card going"—at least that. They've got the volume. There are going to be some technology issues; I understand that. You'll have to contract that out, do an RFP, and do it openly and I hope transparently. Get that going, because that will go right back to the transit tax credit.

I believe you are a very clever man. I would say that. I have read your CV and I have great respect for what you have achieved and done and your remarks. We all are held to very high levels of accountability here in this office. What I'm trying to say here is that if you were to give one signal—for instance, this transit card I think is the key, and they will be fighting about that, Minister. Having served on regional council, they will be fighting about that, and if Hazel doesn't like it, it will never pass; if David doesn't like it, it will never pass. Do you understand? You get the dissenting because, "My idea is the best idea." So the minister and the Premier have to actually step into this thing: "We're going to do it. Here it is. Here's the template. Here's the probably \$20 million

or \$40 million. Take it out of the gas tax money and implement the plan." Then I'll actually be here, and I believe John Tory will be here, to say, "By golly, these guys actually mean business." We'll have to sit up and take notice.

**1620**

Right now, I've put in an hour here and I've been fairly critical, but in fact there's no reason for being critical, because there's nothing here to criticize. It's a shell. I mean that respectfully. Somebody caught you on an off-day to sign off on this thing, I think. I've given some time to the capital transit plan from 2000-01 up to 2003. I actually have the election plan here. I know what your plan was. It's right here. I would put for the key facts here, "On September 27, 2001, this government announced"—that was when we were government—"a ... new, visionary plan for transit that provides for a 10-year, \$9-billion plan to ensure the province has a transit system that will help strengthen the economy and protect the environment." That's a Tory message back on September 27, 2001, so you're on the right track. I mean the transit track here. Go for it. "The investment is made up of \$3.25 billion from the provincial government...." It's probably the same money that was talked about then that you're talking about now. We also had the Ontario transit renewal program, which I've mentioned. In that plan there was a cost-shared plan of \$103 million for OTRP in 2003 on January 16; an additional \$100 million in 2002.

Here's a key one—and this one here may not connect directly to this, but we get criticized for our lack of support for transit. You know, if you keep pouring money into the existing dysfunctional structure, there won't be integration. It's hard enough in Durham region to integrate the transit systems between Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa and the surrounding communities. It's been a nightmare. They have done it. And the impact on your household tax, Deputy Sergeant at Arms—and that's your tax and mine—is basically, I think, about \$20 a household. That doesn't sound much, but it's still money that you don't get to spend. You should ask yourself, "Is it any better?" That's just simple analysis. You don't have to be a consultant. Well, you can be a consultant if you want.

This is one of the things that they did here that we did. "On January 1, 2002, the province also reassumed responsibility for the operating and base capital" budget "of GO Transit." Now then, how does that manifest? That decision was made because prior to that, under the Greater Toronto Services Board realignment, they had coordinated what they had called pool funding. The regions all had to chip in money into the operational budget. Durham and most of the regions, like Halton, were upset that they were into the pooling to support transit. But we took over that budget and that gave them tax room at the municipal level, probably about \$20 million in Durham region, which they used to increase the number and frequency of routes within, for instance, Clarington, Scugog and parts that were not serviced prior to that. Now they've moved along, with the gas tax



money from the federal and provincial governments, to increase the number of routes. So there is some integrated transit going on very slowly within Durham region. York region is well advanced; Waterloo region is well advanced; Ottawa region is well advanced. Toronto is doing the job as well as it can with the infrastructure it has, and maybe has too much politics in it, I suppose. It needs to have more strength from the province.

But here's the deal: If the TTC is by far the biggest one—and it goes back to Bill 104 here. Here's what I meant by the governance dysfunctionality: If the governance makes an agreement with the TTC that you're going to spend your money to increase the routes to Mississauga, and the money is at the TTC, they're not going to give them the money unless the minister forces them to by some measure or some regulation, because it's there, the city of Toronto, and it's the riders' money. Quite honestly, it's pretty hard to force someone or to absolutely strongly encourage them if you don't have the clout to do it. That is basically the money—or the law. The law can be fairly punitive in a negative way of working co-operatively.

But a good way to start to engage the ridership issue, again, is the monthly pass and the transit tax credit. I'd be happy to work with you on that. I just say that when I looked at some of the recent comments in the media, I was anxious to use most of the time on this bill today to say that we're struggling on the idea of supporting it.

A couple of issues under the transit critic's role: As I said, the private issuing network was before the auditor's report this past week, I believe it was—Monday, maybe, or last Thursday. Shelly Jamieson is the new deputy and did a great job in terms of informing us. But the private issuing network is where you actually get your licence certificate, your plate and your certificate—not the training and testing; it's a separate thing. The private issuing networks are in serious trouble. They get very little money for what they do. That has been an issue from about 1980, actually. It's been in every auditor's report since the early 1980s. So I'd say take some action on that one, and I made it very clear that we would be in support of making sure that they address the security of the documents themselves under today's security issues.

The other one, too, is something I would encourage. There was an article in the paper that I think pretty well summed it up. It talked about the trash on the roads, the cleanliness of our interchanges. Mayor Dave Ryan seems to be quite outspoken. He might be silenced now, if they give him some kind of reward. But the issue there is that at most of the interchanges there has been a real reduction in the ministry's operational budget for cleaning these exit and entrance ramps. It's affecting us in Clarington as well. I've talked to the mayor there; they are very concerned, whereas the city of Toronto spends more money on that than the ministry itself. So there's some work to be done there as well, Minister, just keeping the existing infrastructure and human spaces clean and appropriate to reflect Ontario, a beautiful province, and Toronto, a great city for tourism. It's kind of "Operation

Cleanup." I say that because we just got back the response to the Earth Day celebrations in my riding. I was overwhelmed by the number of people who brought this to my attention as I participated in some community events.

Also, I was somewhat critical of the unlicensed drivers. I asked a question on this today too. Driver safety—we're talking transportation, although the bill is transit, let's face it. In transportation, I said driver safety is probably the primary issue. In fact, I think that's what you use—the safest highways in Ontario; we all want that. What was brought to my attention by MADD today was that 75% of Ontario's suspended drivers continue to drive. That becomes a bit of an enforcement issue and a re-licensing issue. I hope there is some attention paid to that not just by the auditor, but by the minister, who is here today.

The issue here that we're dealing with in Bill 104 is transit. The point I've made is that the transit plan is not a plan that most of the commentators that I referred to today say will work. It lacks the clout; it lacks the authority and resources to act decisively to get this thing rolling. As Ian Urquhart said in his article, it has run out of gas. I heard an interview on the CBC with Gord Perks. He is a well-known pro-public-transit fellow who said that this bill was "tinkering." I think that's the word he used on CBC with Andy Barrie in the morning. I do listen to that. I listen to all the critics, because we at some point, probably in 2007-08, will be facing the same questions. From what I see here, most of it is post-election, which means nothing is going to happen. It's disappointing, because we all recognize the importance of public transit. There has to be a movement; there has to be a real vision and a plan of action to move this thing to the next step, to the operational level. There's nothing in this bill that's going to make it operational, and it's disappointing.

I don't want to be negative—because I do recognize our role in opposition is to be critical. But on the positive side, I respect the work the minister is trying to do. I'm suspicious that it might be that Dalton is not giving him enough power. He's a little afraid that maybe he'll go off the tracks a bit.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** No. And we're saying here publicly, John Tory, who ran for the mayor of the city of Toronto, knows full well it takes a healthy transit infrastructure to move people safely and effectively and in an environment that's clean, in a place to come and celebrate. This bill won't do that. It won't get me to the ball game any cheaper on the GO train and the TTC, or any faster; it will only cost more. So until I see something in here, some movement—just work with Minister Flaherty or their new transportation minister federally. I'm sure you'll get along. What I'm saying is: Embrace the transit tax idea. I'll work with you; I've done a lot of work. Dr. Roschlau has done a lot of work, and he says that the problem with my bill was the administration issue: How do you collect these little receipts? Well, I'm showing



you right now today, if you buy a weekly 10-trip ticket, you get the receipt. The smart card would be real simple.  
1630

In fact, I've met a group, and I don't want to put their name on the record because I'm not lobbying for anyone, nor would I. I am sitting tonight with Dave Bradley and the Ontario Trucking Association, a great group of people who I believe are part of the speed-limiter issue that you've been meeting on. I'm sure you're going to move on that sometime after 2007. We will be. I believe that we will, because it's good for the environment and the economy. There are implications for it. Its time has come. The time now happens to be when you're in the chair. You have the power; the thing is just the execution of that power.

Dr. Roschlau said the administrative problem was the problem. I made the point already. I'm sure you understand, Speaker from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who normally sits beside me. He recently just got back from a trip, I understand. I knew nothing about it.

I think the point I'm trying to make is that the smart card, Minister, would be one way that you could be decisive and move quickly. I would encourage you to look at the latest and best technology. The SIM card technology is the way to go. It's programmable, functional and it communicates wirelessly. You're a technical person; I understand that. You could actually walk by a scanner with your BlackBerry on, and it would record your fare, just like the 407. It could be done. Do it, and we'll probably be the first to support you.

There's only 46 seconds left. This small bill has allowed me to walk around the area of transit and talk about Mothers Against Drunk Driving and road safety, because there's nothing in this bill that's actually going to make it more affordable for my constituents, the couple who talked to me, who are paying \$10,000 a year to get to work in Toronto, after tax. Think of it. Do the right thing. Make it affordable. Gas is going up, and you don't control that; I understand that. Dalton does.

Do the right thing. Technically, if transit's affordable, they'll move from the car when gas is \$1.50 a litre. They'll move. Then you'll have the money and the public policy motive to do the right thing. We'll be there to support you.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I want to congratulate the member for Durham for not only giving us a review of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act but also giving us a circuitous tour of the greater Toronto area, not to mention a circuitous tour of the on-again, off-again transportation policy. I'm sure I'll want to get the Hansard to see if I can follow the dotted line in terms of all the area that was covered.

I do have to commend him for making some very salient points. One of them was that there's a lot of paper in this bill, but after you get past the paper, there ain't much. This is not what was promised by Dalton McGuinty during the election. If memory serves me cor-

rectly, I think this body, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and this bill has been promised in no less than three throne speeches, two budgets and probably about a dozen other places. So we were all thinking that, boy, there must be something really formidable here. There must be something really quite substantive. I want to thank the member for Durham for pointing out the fact that after you go on this very circuitous around, up and over, there's hardly anything here. This body doesn't seem to have any authority. It sure as heck doesn't have any money. I wonder if they'd even be able to fix a flat tire, never mind run a transit authority. So I want to congratulate the member for Durham for pointing that out in his circuitous way.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the members from Durham and Kenora-Rainy River. Actually it's incredible that you can talk for an hour and say nothing; really, it's incredible. The member took one hour to read the bill. I can understand that. Maybe this was the only time he had to read the bill, so finally he read the bill.

Let me address some of the issues he raised, which had nothing to do with the bill, but he raised other issues. HOV lanes advocated by the previous government: Yes, maybe they started it, but it's typical of the previous government to have plastic cheques issued, and that's what they did. They never financed it. They never provided any money.

He talked about Hazel McCallion's issue, saying, if she didn't support it, what will happen? Let me read this letter from Mayor McCallion. She said there's a "huge backlog in transit that the former Harris government created by cutting off the capital funding of buses and contribution towards the deficit of the transit systems." That is what she said. Then she went on further to say, "I hope that you give me an opportunity"—she wrote it to the Mississauga News—"to express to the Mississauga News the appreciation of the city of Mississauga that the Liberal government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, has taken action on trying to help the municipalities by providing a gas tax and in fact, not only for the capital funding but they have made it very lenient by allowing us to use it for the operating budget of transit."

The member from Durham talked about public policy. The previous government didn't have a public policy on transit, so I don't know what he's talking about. There was no public transit policy. They reduced the funding from \$660 million in 1995-96 to about nothing in 2000-01. That's the record of the previous government.

**Mr. Klees:** That's not true.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I can show you. That's the record of the previous government. The former minister doesn't want to accept it, but that's the truth and that's the record.

**Ms. Scott:** I'm pleased to comment today on Bill 104 and the hour-long, informative and analytical dissection of Bill 104, as opposed to what the Minister of Transportation described. The member from Durham has done



a great job of analysis of the bill. I'm sure if you go back in Hansard, you'll see that.

The member from Durham and I sat on the gridlock task force, because this is an important issue to our areas, not just the GTA. We heard a lot of feedback, and a lot of work has to be done. He mentioned being in ridings that neighbour each other, the expansion of the 407 and how we would like to see that proceed and the business and economic opportunities that would come after that expansion. Certainly the four-laning of Highway 35 through my riding, starting at the 115, would be of great financial and economic benefit to our area. I'm glad the Minister of Transportation is here today to keep in the forefront of his mind what we need in our areas in Durham and Haliburton-Victoria-Brock.

The member from Durham has also done a great job with his transit tax credit that he brought forward, a great initiative, a great incentive. We saw that the federal Conservatives have supported that. I know that MP Barry Devolin is here today and is very supportive of that measure federally, of what Prime Minister Harper did, and I think the province should move towards that.

But getting back to the bill, we all agree that we have to solve the problem of gridlock in the GTA and we want to see something happen. In this bill—even commented on in the *Toronto Star*, “Sadly, this new authority has no clout and few resources.” I think that’s what we’ve heard over and over again.

**Ms. Horwath:** I had to leave the chamber for a few minutes and I guess the member’s speech went downhill from there, because when I was here, for the first little while anyway, the member from Durham made a number of comments about the bill that I thought were salient, ones that I likely will be raising as well. In my recollection, he talked about concern over lack of real power that this authority is going to have and whether or not they’re actually going to have the dollars to do the work that they want to do. The recommendations they’ll bring forward are just that: recommendations that the government would then need to ensure that they fund appropriately to have reasonable implementation of any of those plans.

1640

I guess at the end of those remarks the member spent some time reviewing the various sections of the bill, as members often do. Unfortunately, I had to step away for a few minutes and wasn’t able to hear all of those comments. But I do think it’s important that members, as they go through this legislation, highlight the pieces that are important and relevant in their own minds and to their own communities, and also in terms of the broader perspectives that they bring.

I look forward to, hopefully this evening, making some comments as well. For the first time, the city of Hamilton has been included in the GTTA. The members from Hamilton probably spent some time with the minister indicating to him how important we think that is. I would agree with that and would applaud that part being in there. However, I do have some other concerns

and comments that need to be made. I agree with the member that the gridlock that we’re experiencing and the smog, pollution and air quality issues need to be solved. We need to make sure that the GTTA, although it could possibly have a role in doing that, has the teeth and the tools to undertake that extremely important work. I don’t think that this bill necessarily brings us there.

**The Acting Speaker:** It’s time for a response. The Chair recognizes the member from Durham.

**Mr. O’Toole:** I’m very pleased with the response from the leader of the third party and the member from Hamilton East, as well as the minister and others who have commented.

Yes, there was a lot of time allocated to this. It’s the way the House leader set this up and allocated the time. I did try to use that time, although it was obviously too much time for that bill because, as I said, the laudable objectives are endorsed, the content is weak and designed to fail. The minister seems to stand behind it. His analysis is certainly different than mine, and we have the right to disagree on that. It is my duty to point out the frailties in the bill and under the sections that I made comment on: 9, 16, 24, 35, 36 and 42.

There is a hollow shell here. We are prepared to work going forward. I would certainly encourage public hearings to look at designing an integrated plan, making some really serious commitments, both financially and otherwise. Striking some power in the governance model would be a really good place to start.

I can only say to the minister and his response that at the personal level I would put to you that I have been here for some time, have served for some time, so I’m somewhat offended, but I won’t act negatively. I know a lot about this bill, actually, and I sometimes question your competency. I’ll leave that level for another day, but don’t you tell me about what’s in here when everyone I’ve cited says there is nothing in here. Minister, you either don’t understand or you—I’m offended by that comment personally. I am. I’ve been here 11 years. You said we did nothing. I’ve shown you cabinet documents. You have not seen those, so you’re saying things about things you know nothing about. I’m surprised at the tone, for the minister to be here and not listen respectfully.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time for further debate.

**Ms. Horwath:** I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to the GTTA bill. I have to say that I’ve spent some time looking at not only the bill itself but the remarks of our lead critic on this file, the member from Toronto-Danforth, Peter Tabuns. He spent some time speaking to Bill 104 already and I’m certainly going to be reflecting some of the issues that he raised and also tying that, hopefully, to my own experience. I am someone who is on the very—what would that be?—western edge of this area, in the city of Hamilton, and have spent the last two years since being elected in the by-election in Hamilton East. Oh, that anniversary is coming up. I think May 13 was the date of that election, so it’s about—what?—nine days away. I’ll have to remember to celebrate.



It was interesting, in my initial couple of months, trying to figure out how to get from Hamilton to Toronto and from Toronto to Hamilton during rush hour. I can tell you, there was no end of frustration. Actually, at that time, the government side had a different House leader and we had a lot of midnight sessions, and it really was quite difficult. I was trying as much as possible to use the transit system, to take the GO train from Hamilton, which at the time was a block away from where I lived. It's still there; I've moved my home to a different location. The GO Transit system was what I was trying to rely on in terms of GO trains and it was extremely difficult. Why was it difficult? Well, for a couple of reasons. The first one was the lack of frequency of trains. Toronto to Hamilton, Hamilton to Toronto, only provides three trains in the morning and four trains in the afternoon/evening. So if you don't get on any of the three trains in the morning, you're forced to drive into another jurisdiction with your car to get the GO train. That's really not the solution. We want to get people out of cars, not into cars.

Part of the problem we have in the city of Hamilton is a severe and significant lack of service from GO. That is exacerbated by the lack of funding and the lack of support the city of Hamilton has been able to rely upon from the provincial government for its own transit system. Again, I certainly support the idea, the concept, of an integrated system across regions. I think it's a wise direction to go in, but the problem becomes, if the feeder communities don't have solid transit systems already, then your whole plan falls apart.

I would submit that the government needs to take a really close look at what's happening in communities like Hamilton. Unfortunately, between the downloading that the previous government did and the cost of GO Transit that was put on municipalities—the downloading overall, not just transportation, that municipalities are struggling under—it has meant that they've been in budget squeezes year after year. We know that because year after year, they come here and tell the provincial government that that needs to be fixed. Unfortunately, it still has not yet been fixed.

In the meanwhile, local transit systems have been eroded over the last couple of years, and I know this for a fact. I was on city council in Hamilton as we struggled under the burden of downloading to try to find the appropriate opportunities for investment in our transit system. What happens when there's not enough money in a transit system? Your equipment begins to be a bit run-down, your buses are not top of the line, they're not air conditioned, they're not as reliable, they break down, and for the rider it's not a very positive experience. So that's one thing that happens.

What's another thing that happens? Well, another thing that happens is that, in the squeeze, the politicians are saying, "You can't come in with budget increases to this department or that department," and the HSR—Hamilton Street Railway—was one of those departments, like every other department under the burden of downloading, that had to come in with budget savings. Of

course, if you're going to try to save money in your budget, there's one really good way to do that, and that is to reduce the route options or the frequency of buses in your system. That might reduce your budget, that might reduce the amount of time your buses are on the roads and the amount of gas you're using and the amount of labour you're paying for and all of these things, but what else does that do? It reduces the reliability of your system. It takes away access. It takes away the convenience. And it reduces ridership, and that's problematic, because we want to go in the other direction, right?

If we're going to have these fully integrated systems operating at the best capacity, so that we actually have an effect on gridlock and smog, then the only way we're going to get there—and I think members around this chamber would have to agree—is by optimizing our individual transit systems within these various communities that are part of the GTTA and, as well, the GO system that connects them together. But, as I was saying before, that's not going to happen if individual transit systems are withering on the vine for lack of fertilization by provincial funding and provincial support. So that's a big problem.

There's another thing that happens when you're strapped for dollars at your local level. You've already tried to trim your routes, reduce your frequency or expand the wait times between buses throughout the various routes. The other thing you do when you can no longer cut is that you have to find a way to deal with your budget, so you start thinking, "Well, maybe it's time we raised the fares." My community struggled with that year after year and we were able to successfully prevent fares from going up.

**1650**

Why did people struggle? I was one of those councillors, when I was on city council in Hamilton dealing with the HSR budget, who just refused to agree to rate increases. And why was that? There were a couple of reasons. Certainly part of it was affordability. Whenever there's a rate increase, it's not just 10 cents' extra fare. There are also a number of things—perhaps I could ask for a glass of water please, that would be very helpful, thank you—that we look at with a fare increase: the packages, right? There are the students' fares and the seniors' fares and all of those package deals, if you want to call them that, or those rate packages that are especially put together for certain groups of riders.

Invariably, when the rate is going to go up by a dime or whatever it's going to be, it's not only going to impact the person who's paying the regular, at-the-box fare, but it's also going to affect senior citizens and it's also often going to affect students, because their prices are being pushed up as well. So yes, there's an affordability problem that comes with fare rate increases, but the statistics show that every time the fares go up, ridership is reduced again. When you're cutting services, cutting corners on your routes, and you're trying to cut back to try to save money—thank you very much. I appreciate that, Zachery.



**Mr. Chudleigh:** Zachery's a great page.

**Ms. Horwath:** Zachery is a wonderful page. I needed that drink of water, and I really appreciate it. Lovely. Thank you.

When you're grappling with all these possible options on how to reduce your budget, what's happening regardless of where you're pushing, whether it's reduction of routes, reduction of frequency or increase in fares, is that all of those things result in reduced ridership. That's the exact opposite of what the stated goal is, not only of this legislation but of any dense urban area that's trying to deal with issues like smog. The bottom line is that what we want to do is get more people on to our transit systems; we want more people taking the bus.

I can remember a very frustrating debate in the city of Hamilton, when our advisory committee was talking about putting racks on our buses so people could cycle to the bus and put the bike on the bus on a rack. Then the bus would continue on, and when they were finished work, they would do the same thing on the way back. They could cycle to the bus stop and be able to use their bike part of the way. It was a very frustrating experience because a big part of the challenge was the capital investment to outfit enough buses to make the system work.

Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, while I'm coughing. I'm getting over a cold and I'm losing my voice. I've lost my voice. I can't talk anymore. It's gone all of a sudden. I want to keep talking about this issue and I don't have any other members to take over for me. I really have been battling a very bad cold. I'm going to try to keep going and see what happens, but it's very bad.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mario Sergio):** Excuse me. I would like to ask the member if she would like to ask for unanimous consent to move on, and then she can come back.

**Ms. Horwath:** If I could get unanimous consent to take a voice break and have another member speak, I would much appreciate it. I still have nine minutes left on the clock.

**The Acting Speaker:** She's asking for unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Further debate?

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I'll be happy to speak for my 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker, if you allow me.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Racco:** Twenty minutes? I'll be happy to speak even for an hour, if it's allowed, on second reading of this very important bill, Bill 104.

Mr. Speaker, you know very well what I'm going to say, because your riding is next to mine. We know how important it is that this honourable House spends significant time to address one of the most important issues in the province of Ontario, certainly within the GTA, and that is public transportation. We have a major problem and we must address it. The GTTA is going to address this problem. Surely in the long run we will have to make some adjustments, but it is a "must" bill. I'm surprised when I hear some of my friends on the other side

speaking in favour of public transportation but somehow they believe this bill does not address the issue, in their opinion—which, in my opinion, is not correct.

There is no question that Bill 104 has significant support. At the launching of this issue we had people from all over attending Minister Takhar's announcement at the convention centre in Toronto. From my area, I want to stress that the chairman of the region and a number of mayors were there, both physically and also with their minds, because they felt that was a very, very important announcement. I know they are supportive of this bill. Quite frankly, they feel that much time has been wasted on this very important issue. To give you an example—I spoke about this a few days ago in the House—in the city of Vaughan, which is one city I represent, together with the town of Markham, a piece of each of the two municipalities, a study was done and the results were announced last Monday, so three days ago. The chairman of that committee is Julian Fantino; we all know him. That study made it clear that the most important issue in the city of Vaughan is public transportation. The number, by the way, was 16%. The next item of importance to the people of Vaughan was crime, and that was at 15%. Health care was at 5%. Education, I believe, was about 4%. By a significant margin, my constituents feel that public transportation is the most important issue. And the GTTA will be addressing this issue that should have been addressed probably 15 years ago.

We know that the prior government attempted to do something, and they failed. Within three years, the committee they put together, the GTSB, failed and was removed. I believe their time was from 1999 to 2002. One of the reasons they failed was because it was too large, made up of about 42 people, I believe, and was made up strictly of politicians. The GTTA is made up of 11 people, and they don't have to be politicians. I hope and trust that in fact there will be a mix so we will have a better balance of the needs and wants of the people in the province and the GTA more specifically, including Hamilton.

We live in a region of over 5.5 million people, including Hamilton. It's time that we did long-term planning, and Bill 104 is attempting to do exactly that. It's giving power to 11 people to plan for the greater Toronto area, do long-term planning, a five-year plan, and of course update those plans as necessary. So in the near future we are going to be able to fix the existing system we have and we are going to do better and improve it so that our standard of living will be significantly better than it is today.

1700

There is no question that public transportation is affecting our everyday life. Many of us spend significant time in gridlock—gridlock that, if I may say, is mostly caused by the poor decisions made by the prior administration, by the prior government. Not only did they not pay attention to public transportation but they also eliminated any subsidies to public transportation and left all the costs to the municipalities and the regions.



That has affected us so much that it will be many years before we are able to reach a decent, acceptable level and then do major investments, as we are doing now, for the long term.

I also wanted to stress that in Bill 104, one of the differences with the GTTA is that we are concentrating on the area of transportation planning and priorities. Unfortunately, the GTSB was all over the map. They were trying to address water and sewers; they were trying to address transit, roads and highways, social services, housing, economic development and trade, and growth management. They were not focused clearly on what they really wanted to do, and of course we know the results: In less than three years, they had to close and leave public transportation in the mess it was and is in even today. No matter how much investment we have made, we still have so much catch-up to do. But there is no question for me that Minister Takhar and the present government have put in and will continue to put in significant dollars to make public transportation something that in the long run we will be proud of.

We also need to create what I consider stable public transportation. In the past, we responded to pressure, either because there was political pressure or there were friends who had an interest in seeing some lands being developed. The pressure on the government of the day was to make sure that some transportation lines or roads were to be built only so their property could be built on, and that is not really good planning. We have to stop doing that, and that's what the GTTA is going to do. We're going to plan for many, many years to come, because only when we plan and invest a significant dollar amount yearly can we feel comfortable that the right thing will be done.

A stable public transportation industry is good not only because we will have a better transportation system, but at the same time it will also give some security to those employees working in this industry. We have people who were hired to build a subway, and that small section of the subway was completed and these individuals were left without a job. That is not something that we should encourage. Those people have lives, families, responsibilities, mortgages, things to do, and certainly not many people would be interested in getting involved in that type of employment when there is no reasonable security.

This industry also has been poorly dealt with. That is probably one of the reasons that, whenever we try to do something in public transportation today, the costs might be—are, in my opinion—more than what would normally be expected, because there is no consistency. There are no people doing the same job, if they choose to, for a long time. That means we may train and educate some individuals, but then, very shortly, they will have to look for another job because there is no security in that job. Therefore, next time there is an investment in transportation, some new people will be hired and again we'll have to start from scratch. There is nothing that makes sense in continuing in that direction.

I believe that long-term and consistent planning is needed. The GTTA is going to do that. Nothing in this world is perfect, but it is a very good start, and hopefully all of us will see the merit in supporting it.

I also want to touch again on the importance of this committee to coordinate the entire GTA. Today, as we all know, the government has allocated \$670 million to the expansion of the Spadina-York subway extension all the way to the corporate centre in the riding of Thornhill, which is my riding, and I'm very proud of that, or the city of Vaughan, as some people know better.

But that is not the only subway line that the GTA needs. We certainly are looking at Yonge Street as an area of higher transportation that needs significant attention. There is also a need for the Scarborough extension. There is also going to be a need for an extension from the Scarborough line that will connect the municipality of Markham right at city hall, where the town of Markham has done significant planning for a number of years. Today, if you drive around that area, you can see what good planning has gone into the works.

This is a very important topic. To conclude, I hope that all of you will appreciate the needs of having such a body that is made up with an interesting number. We have four people from Toronto and four people from the 905 area, so that we have the same representation and the same number of people. So the 905 in this matter certainly has been dealt with properly. Of course, we've got one from Hamilton and two people from the province of Ontario to make sure the decisions will be made wisely and well for the good of Ontarians. I trust that, as this committee starts working, their work will be very much appreciated by all of us and certainly by Ontarians, because there is no other way to go but this way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Time for questions and comments.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** It's interesting that this is a government bill that is coming forward and the government is supposed to be promoting this bill, and yet not once during this debate—and this is the second day of debate—has a government member used up his time on this debate. They're not really trying to sell this bill. You would think that maybe this bill is not as important to them as they would lead you to believe. Why is it that they don't take all their time to try to sell the bill? I say to the people at home: They are over there yapping. You can't hear them, but they're all over there yapping and they are not trying to sell their legislation. I think they are taking a backseat on this stuff so that when it comes time for an election and they have to defend this stuff, they will say, "Well, no, I wasn't all that supportive of it. No, I didn't speak to it. Well, I had to speak to it for a few minutes. I didn't speak to it for very long, because I don't really believe in it."

Anyway, I'm amazed. When we were over there, you filled the time allotted because you were proud of what you were doing and you were trying to sell the legislation to the people of Ontario.



The member talked about this being a long-term plan, and that was fine. Being a long-term plan, that's wonderful. We're all in agreement with that, but that's not what they promised during the election. During the election, they promised that there would be a transit card in place within 18 months. Now, this is the fifth or sixth announcement. They've made five or six announcements of it, and there is no transit card in place within 18 months of their election. No, sir, there's no transit card there, but they've announced it five or six times, in two throne speeches and three budgets. Three budgets and two throne speeches they've announced it, and we still don't have anything to show for it.

1710

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Horwath:** I'm going to speak with less of a tone.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Horwath:** Thank you. I want to thank the members for allowing me to take a bit of a voice rest. I want to thank the member for Thornhill for jumping in so quickly and taking some time to speak to the bill. Hopefully, I'll be all right in the next round and be able to make some more remarks.

The bill is definitely one that's not without controversy; there's no doubt about it. But it's also one that I think people will acknowledge at least the principle of: We need to move forward in some way in dealing with our transportation systems in the province.

It's unfortunate that the bill that has finally come forward is one that in many ways is disappointing to so many people, particularly in regard—and I've mentioned this before—to the lack of real power the board has to actually implement anything, because everything has to be decided at the provincial level once recommendations come forward from the authority. The other piece, of course, is the concern around the extent to which financing or funding or opportunities to generate revenue are going to be available to implement any of the recommendations that do come forward.

Speaking from the position of the city of Hamilton, which is pleased to be included in the GTTA, there still remain a number of concerns not only with the smart card and the implementation of that and the way to achieve the seamlessness that we all like to talk about, but also the extent to which the feeder municipalities, if you want to call them that, the individual municipalities, have transit systems that are functioning at a capacity that ensures that people are getting out of their cars and using them to then use the interregional system.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** I certainly agree with the member for Thornhill that this is extremely important across the GTA because we absolutely need a body to plan, prioritize and integrate transit systems across the GTA and the city of Hamilton.

Let me give you an example of what we've done in York region. Of course, the member for Oak Ridges is familiar with that in terms of history. A few years ago,

York region amalgamated various transit systems, including Markham transit and Richmond Hill transit, to form York Region Transit. At that time, I was on Markham and York regional council, and there were these naysayers who said, "No, this is not going to work. We in Markham are going to lose control of our transit system and our residents will not be well served," and on and on and on.

What has happened? York Region Transit has done extremely well, and people are actually saying, "Gee, this is really meeting the needs of the region, including residents in Markham, Richmond Hill and others who had transit systems before, as well as those who did not have a transit system, such as residents of Georgina." So I am quite convinced that if we have a centralized body responsible for overall planning and prioritizing, then it's going to work.

I want to talk briefly about a comment made by a previous speaker with respect to whether the minister will have control of the GTTA board simply because the two provincial appointees will be the chair and vice-chair respectively. This could not be further from the truth. I think this is actually a very rational, balanced approach. If there is going to be an appointee from the Toronto area or from the 905 area, then the other members will say, "Gee, this is going to be controlled by Toronto or controlled by the 905. We may as well pack it in."

**Mr. Klees:** I look forward to my 20 minutes coming up, in case anyone is tempted to turn off the television. It's coming very shortly.

In the meantime, I want to commend the member for her comments relating to this bill. I look forward to hearing her complete her debate. I think all of us in this House look forward to substance. I don't think there's anyone in this House—I can't imagine—who would disagree with the stated intent and purpose of the bill. What we all are looking forward to is some sense that there is more than spin here and more than another announcement.

I say this often: This government, without question, has the best spin doctors I have ever encountered in politics. They have the ability to put into the window a policy announcement. They have the ability to announce it and reannounce it and make it sound as though it's the latest and the newest. The problem is that after a number of months we see another reannouncement, and they all are as enthusiastic as they were on the first day they announced it, knowing that they haven't done anything about it. My concern, on behalf of my constituents and the people in this province, is that we have yet one more very nicely packaged announcement here, and when we get the wrapping off, we find an empty box.

So we're hopeful. We're hopeful that as time goes on we at least can force the minister to make some declaration of content that might accompany this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time for a response.

**Mr. Racco:** Let me thank the members from Halton, Hamilton East, Markham and Oak Ridges. To the member from Halton I'll say that the bill is very simple



and it's wanted. That's why there's no need to waste hours on debating it, at least on our side. We know what we want, the objectives are met and we are happy to vote on it as soon as possible.

I want to remind the member from Hamilton East that her surrounding area is very much supportive of the GTTA. The articles in the local newspapers are making it clear. I am sure that if she will take direction from her neighbourhood ridings, she will be supportive of this bill when the vote will come.

My friend from Markham is quite familiar, as much as I am, with the needs of public transportation. His comments are clear that we need this type, because it happened not only in Markham but of course in Vaughan and Richmond Hill and so on, where we were able to increase significantly the use of public transportation. I want to remind this House that after we allocated the money from the tax on gas, the number in the region of York went up about 18.6%, when the average in Ontario went up 3.2%. That means the region of York needs a better way of making a decision on public transportation.

Again to the member from Oak Ridges, who talks about spin doctors: With the highest respect that I have for him, there isn't a better spin doctor than he in this House, and I don't have to remind him about the plastic cheques that my friend enjoyed showing. We don't do that. We provide actual funding to make sure that public transportation takes priority in this honourable House. We have made public transportation one of the most important issues in Ontario because we need it and it's the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe we have unanimous consent to return to the member from Hamilton East.

**Ms. Horwath:** I'm going to try to get through these last nine minutes of my speech because I think this bill is extremely important to speak to. I've already run down some of the issues and concerns that I have from the perspective of someone who knows what it's like to deal with a transit system that is starved for cash, that is starved for dollars, that is starved for operating dollars and that is starved for capital dollars. I had a chance to talk a little bit about the Catch-22 that happens in a municipality when they're trying to find ways to make those budgets work, when the solutions inevitably end up leading to decreased ridership, which in and of itself is problematic because then it continues to reduce the efficiency of the system.

The areas in the bill that we are particularly concerned about—it's not necessarily specific to any area, but we're concerned that the bill itself is not going to achieve much at all. That's what is problematic about it. We don't think it's going to achieve much because we don't think that the GTTA, as it's put together in the bill, is going to be able to actually accomplish anything. We don't think it has the power to accomplish anything. In fact, our lead critic on this, the member from Toronto-Danforth, our newest member, Peter Tabuns, I think describes the bill as being an empty vessel. It's like a structure but without

any meat. It's a skeleton without meat on the bones, and that's a problem.

**1720**

Unfortunately, the recommendations that come forward are going to need to be implemented by government, so all of the most wonderful recommendations possible could come forward but not be implemented because the government simply is not prepared to implement them.

We were hopeful. Many people were hopeful. I think there were millions of people who were hopeful that we would see some real action on this situation. Why were people hopeful? Because, as I was saying to you earlier, the frustration of trying to get in and around the GTA as a commuter is absolutely frightening. I can remember the long weekend over Easter that we just had not too long ago. I left here, and I happened to have my car that day. That's the other thing: The frustrating part about this is that if people are not able to achieve a reasonable time frame getting to work or getting into the GTA using the transit system, they're going to go back to their cars. That's what is happening in a lot of cases. But on this particular Thursday, I did happen to have my car here.

From Toronto to Hamilton or Hamilton to Toronto is about 72 kilometres. At 100 kilometres an hour, you could get back and forth fairly quickly if you were driving at the speed limit. But the problem is that you never or rarely drive at the speed limit. I'm not saying it's because you drive faster; I'm saying that because invariably you're bumper to bumper all the way from the Gardiner Expressway right through to the Skyway bridge in Hamilton, and that has happened to me a number of times.

I left that one weekend on a—

**Mr. Chudleigh:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce my fiancée, Ms. Sandy Krueger, who's sitting in the west members' gallery. That's probably not a point of order, but it was an awful lot of fun.

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like confirmation from the lady in the gallery that that's actually a fact.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton East.

**Ms. Horwath:** Thank you for being here. You gave me an opportunity to have a voice break. I'm having trouble with my voice.

I left this place at about 10 minutes to 4, because I wasn't on duty that day, and I had to be back in Hamilton. I got back to Hamilton at 20 after 6. It took me two hours and 40 minutes to get from Toronto to Hamilton, and that's just insane. If there was a day, and sometimes there is—I'm being a bit facetious—from time to time when there are no major events going on in Toronto and it's a Sunday afternoon, you can actually drive it in about—now I have to figure out the math, because if I say the wrong amount of time, people will know how fast I drive on the highway—you can do it in about 50 minutes. In about 50 minutes you can get from Toronto to Hamilton on a clear day, as they say. But unfortunately



those days are not clear, because the GTA is paralyzed by gridlock. We all know it is.

We also know that there are other factors that have led to the gridlock that we have. It's not here by accident. It's here because of ongoing poor planning in the province; it's here because of massive urban sprawl that we continue to allow to occur. Unfortunately, those root causes are not being adequately addressed by the government. When those root causes aren't being addressed, when the real efforts aren't put in place to increase urban densities, reduce urban sprawl and to have firm urban boundaries so that development doesn't just continue to go on forever and ever without any end in sight, when those things continue to be allowed to happen in Ontario, we're not going to be able to ever really address the gridlock issue in any reasonable way.

But I want to get back to where we see some of the failures in the bill. It's not only the contributing factors, if you want to call them that, around the planning process and around the individual transit systems that will feed into the broader system that have been starved for so long and have not been able to provide a good option for commuters at the other end, but it's also when you acknowledge that the government has put in place basically an empty shell of a structure, an empty shell of a bill that, from what we can see, is not going to be able to easily achieve any number of solutions, because the process is going to require an entirely different set—if they were serious about moving forward in a speedy way, in a quick way, in a way that was going to get us some real solutions any time soon, you wouldn't see this kind of structure put in place.

I think everybody who is concerned about gridlock and the billions of dollars of lost economic activity because of gridlock would agree that something needs to be done. I think most people were looking quite carefully for the government to move forward on this particular file. Unfortunately, what we've ended up with is something where it is still really difficult to see how it's going to solve the problem.

We're concerned about the inability of the authority to implement anything that's got any teeth, but we also are concerned that the sources of revenue simply are not there for the implementation of any of these plans. They could come up with the greatest plans in the world, but unfortunately there's nothing at all built into this bill that guarantees or that in any way assists or helps the GTTA to find funding sources, or to be assured of funding sources or to be guaranteed funding sources for the solutions they find for our gridlock problems in the GTTA.

On the one hand, yes, as a Hamiltonian, it's nice for once for it to be acknowledged up front that our city is part of this Greater Golden Horseshoe area and needs to be part of the mix. Unfortunately, our transit system is falling apart. So are many others. This is not going to get us where we need to go.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Balkissoon:** I'm pleased to add a few comments on Bill 104. The government's intention with Bill 104 is that the GTTA will bring together the province, municipalities and local transit agencies. The intent is for co-operation by the people who are appointed to the GTTA in the interests of the people we serve. To be honest with you, that's what the Canadian community is built on, democracy, that you can debate issues and come to conclusions.

A lot of the naysayers are saying that the bill has no teeth, that it has no power for the GTTA, and rightly so as they have read it to suit them because that's their ideology. I would remind them, though, that previous governments amalgamated the city of Toronto against the wishes of the people. I would remind them that the city of Toronto has struggled, that it has not worked. In fact, the cost for the city of Toronto has almost doubled. I was a member of the city of Toronto council.

I will also remind them that they ordered the GTSB—I was a member of the GTSB and it did not work because there was no co-operation.

I think the minister should be thanked for what he's doing here, which is giving those bodies, the transit authorities in the GTTA, a position on the board to sit and work out a strategy and make transit in this region work. We, as the government, will facilitate it. In fact, the government has already shown co-operation because we've actually brought in two cents of the gas tax to help the region with transit. If you talk to the mayors around the region, you'll see they're all thankful this government has done that.

There was a comment about the minister appointing political appointments. I got appointed to the previous government SHSC, which is a huge success.

1730

**Mr. Chudleigh:** The member for Scarborough—Rouge River makes an interesting point, that the GTSB failed because the organization of it didn't work. Yet that same organization is being reintroduced by the Minister of Transportation. That organization has already proved that it doesn't work. When you put one community against another community, you're not going to have any success. And that is unfortunate.

My comments should be directed towards the member from Hamilton, who very courageously finished her speech. I know the feeling when your voice leaves you, especially when you're in this business. It's your main asset. When your voice leaves you, it becomes very difficult. Congratulations on persevering, showing your courage and coming back and finishing your speech. That was great. Of course, it's not only finishing her speech, but what she said.

The points that she made were very important, in that this bill will probably not accomplish what it has to accomplish. The people of Hamilton, the people of Halton, the people of Durham, the people of Toronto and the people of York will not arrive at the point where they can count on public transit to get them to and from their work, to and from the places they want to go to, in the



future. That's a shame, because a city the size of Toronto and the surrounding areas really should have an integrated system that works, and works well. The member for Hamilton pointed out that that is not going to happen with this piece of legislation. Until we get this piece of legislation straightened out—and maybe it can be straightened out in committee; maybe there can be additions to it that will make it work. But until we get there, this legislation has a long way to go.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to congratulate the member for Hamilton East for her valiant effort in speaking to this bill. I think anyone who was watching at home saw the great difficulty the member from Hamilton East was having in speaking about a bill that is essentially an empty vessel. In fact, this bill left her speechless on not one but two attempts. The reason it left her speechless is that we have to remember that this bill and what it's supposed to be about has been announced in three budgets, two throne speeches, a plethora of press conferences and a multitude of photo ops. Yet when it finally makes its appearance in the third year into the McGuinty government, while there is a lot of paper, there's hardly anything here.

Anyone knows that if you're going to run a transit system, you have to have a capital plan and capital capacity—money for capital. If you read this bill, as the member for Hamilton East pointed out, there is none. If you're going to run a transit system, you have to have an operating financial plan and operating financial capacity. But when you read this bill, there is none. So no wonder the member for Hamilton East was rendered speechless twice by this empty vessel.

I also want to thank the member for Hamilton East for pointing out just how serious this problem has become, that a lot of money and people's time is being lost in the economy of the greater Toronto area because there isn't a working, functioning, efficient transit system.

**Mr. Peterson:** It's a real pleasure to speak to a bill which I think puts forward long-range planning and ideas which surpass maybe the mundane nature that the members opposite wish to see in it. I used to fly to Japan on business, and we would go across the Pacific Ocean in 300 miles of beautiful clear skies. After 10 hours of flying we would see a thunder cloud. It wasn't a thunder cloud at all; it was Osaka and Tokyo clouded in smog and haze that only dissipated once a year when they closed down all the factories and a lot of the cars would be taken off the roads.

Part of planning transportation is getting rid of the biggest source of pollution we have in our environment, which is the automobile, and finding ways for people to travel and for goods to move in a less polluted, more efficient way. It is not an easy process to bring together different levels of government and different municipalities and it's not easy even to get the NDP—who, one would always think, would believe in the collective, would believe that we, as a group, can do more than we can as individuals—to buy into this. It amazes me.

Certainly when you try to herd cats, as you find in the Conservative Party, you couldn't get them to buy into it.

This is a very interesting approach to building a better future for our children, building a cleaner environment and for us to spend less of our time in the commute of life but rather in the fulfillment of life.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for a response. The Chair recognizes the member from Hamilton East.

**Ms. Horwath:** I want to thank the members for Scarborough–Rouge River, Halton, Rainy River and Mississauga South for their remarks, but before I speak to those, I wanted to also thank the member from Etobicoke North, who gave me advice in terms of trying to get my voice back. Unfortunately, he told me to go and put some steam in my face from the washroom here and maybe the steam would help my throat. Unfortunately, the water doesn't get hot enough, I found out. I guess we're trying to save money around here, too, which is always a good thing.

The members who spoke to my remarks focused on a number of different issues, and I think everybody's quite aware of the importance of us dealing with the gridlock. I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, who spent some of his time, though, talking about ministerial political appointments, which I didn't raise in my remarks. Maybe he's feeling a little bit guilty about something over there—I'm not sure.

Nonetheless the member from Halton spent some time talking about his experience around reliability. I think that's extremely important and that's something I tried to illustrate as well. If people do not find the systems to be reliable, whether it's their own system in their own region or whether it's an inter-regional system, they're not going to be committed to it and we're not going to get that kind of buy-in.

To the member from Rainy River, I appreciate very much his comments, particularly around not only the lack of financing, which I raised in my speech, which is extremely important, but also the fact that this government has announced this over and over again, and then to come up with something that is so short on—

**Mr. Hampton:** Lame.

**Ms. Horwath:** Yes, so lame—so short on action is problematic and very concerning for all of us.

Finally, the member from Mississauga South spent some time talking about his own experiences in another city where smog was a big problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Oak Ridges.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm pleased to address this legislation before us. I want to say at the outset that I support the intent of this bill. In fact, if one believes, as I believe, that gridlock is one of the key issues in the greater Toronto area for any government to wrestle with, then it's appropriate that a government would bring forward specific legislation to deal with that. I'm sure that's the intent of the government with this legislation.

I have serious concerns, and that is that while the legislation, in broad terms, speaks about the importance



of planning, addresses the issue of broader coordination of transportation plans and transit plans, while it speaks about bringing the various regions into the planning process, it addresses what I believe to be important as well, and that is a broader coordinated and integrated fare card or policy.

1740

As has been mentioned by other speakers, there is very little substance in this bill. I want to start by referring to a comment made by the Minister of Transportation in his earlier remarks, in which he said that the previous government had no transit plan, had no transportation plan. I want to set the record straight to make it very clear that many of these items that are being brought forward now in this legislation were in fact part of our transportation and transit plan and strategy that was developed in consultation with stakeholders in transportation and in transit. The Smart Growth strategy, which unfortunately we don't hear this government speak about, was a planning strategy that incorporated a number of years of very important work that was done by the broader community. It was work that produced significant and very substantive planning documents for the greater Toronto area that addressed growth, that addressed transit and transportation, and identified certain priorities. My encouragement to the minister is to look into the filing drawers and look for those documents that relate to Smart Growth planning, and it will save you a lot of time. In fact, it will help to focus your priorities.

The minister also made the statement that there was never a transit or a transportation strategy. The fact is that we were working under a 10-year provincial transit investment program: \$335 million a year committed for 10 years. That was the long-term commitment under that program. In 2003, under that program, \$62.3 million was dedicated for TTC transit capital renewal. That was under the 2003 municipal transit renewal program, which the minister should know about. There was \$50.8 million per year as part of that, which was freed up for GO Transit capital costs resulting from the provincial uploading of GO Transit, which was all part of that transit strategy. There was \$13.3 million for inter-regional transit expansion. Those were under the GTIP program, which again supplemented the broader provincial transit strategy of our government. There was \$64 million for the TTC subway system and another \$511 million that the minister seems to forget about that was dedicated to the Sheppard subway. In addition to that, there was another \$50 million in 2001 for not only the Sheppard subway, but 55 other projects.

Now, if the minister can in all good conscience stand in his place and say, "There wasn't a transit strategy," I don't know what that was. But I ask the minister to go back to his own briefing notes. These are all in your drawer; I left them there for you. They're in the bottom left-hand drawer of your desk.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** There were none there.

**Mr. Klees:** Have a look, and you will find that not only was there a strategy there, but there was a commitment from the previous government.

With regard to transportation, in that same drawer, you will find our 10-year, \$10-billion strategy for transportation. While we were the government, we spent that money; we invested that money in Ontario's road systems. I wanted to set that record straight because I think it will benefit the minister significantly if he looks up some of that information.

But I want to get on to this bill that is before us. First of all, I'd like to speak about the structure. I commend the government for streamlining the size of this organization, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, and limiting it to the number of members of that board that they have. I think that is wise, and I will support that. However, here is where I believe a mistake has been made, and I ask the minister to give serious consideration to this. While there are appointments there from the city of Toronto—I believe there are four—and then one for each of the regions, and the minister has latitude to make, I believe, two appointments, what this legislation allows is that those appointments from the regions and the city of Toronto be elected officials.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** No, it doesn't.

**Mr. Klees:** Well, it allows. It doesn't say that they are restricted. It simply states—well, the minister says it doesn't, and I'm going to be very interested now in looking at this, because under section 9 it states:

"(2) The board shall be composed of,

"(a) two persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister," so obviously that is whoever the minister deems appropriate.

"(b) the following persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister:

"(i) four persons recommended by the council of the city of Toronto,

"(ii) one person recommended by the council of the city of Hamilton...."

Minister, unless I'm reading this incorrectly, that certainly leaves latitude for these councils to appoint an elected official. I'm saying to you in all sincerity, the member from Scarborough—Rouge River earlier mentioned and referred to the failure of the GTSB. That was a failure, and I believe as we discuss this issue with anyone, and perhaps the member from Scarborough—Rouge River will admit this, one of the reasons was the parochialism that developed on that board where we had politicians appointed to that board, obviously fighting for their own reasons and self-interest. That's why we had decision gridlock on that board.

As I was looking at this broader issue when I sat in that chair, the conclusion that I came to was that in order for a transportation authority like this to work, it should not be elected officials who sit or are appointed on that board. It should be individuals who have expertise in planning, who have expertise in transit or transportation



matters, so that the planning that takes place and the responsibilities as set out in this legislation can in fact be done not from the standpoint of what is politically expedient or whoever has the most political clout, but that it is what is in the best interests of transportation planning, transit planning, for the greater Toronto area.

My recommendation, Minister, is that you consider making an amendment to this legislation that would preclude an appointment of an elected official. Councils have the opportunity to meet with, to discuss their particular interests, and to do that through the appointed person, but I believe it's going to serve you well, and the government and the province of Ontario well, if you would consider that change.

I'd like to also refer to the responsibility that the corporation has. Under section 6, it states clearly:

"(1) In carrying out its objects as described in clause 5(1)(a), the corporation shall,

"(a) create a transportation plan for the regional transportation area and plan, coordinate and set priorities...," and that's appropriate. That's a very important direction that you, as minister, give.

However, here's my concern. You move on then to 6(2)(a), and it reads as follows. The transportation plan required for implementation must,

"(a) take into consideration all modes of transportation, including highways, railways, local transit systems, the GO Transit system, cycling and walking;

"(b) be consistent with the minister's transportation strategy for the province..."

The reason I point this out is that I don't know what your transportation strategy is. There is none contained here in the legislation. There should be one. Perhaps you're working on that—I hope you are—but there isn't one now. So what we have here is a direction to this new organization that you're going to bring into being. You're asking them to set a transportation plan, which is appropriate, but it must be consistent with your provincial transportation strategy. I would ask the minister, perhaps in his reply, to tell the House what that transportation strategy is, where we can find it, where we can go to see it, or, if it's in development, when we can expect to see it. In fact, is there an opportunity for us to participate with you in the development of that if it isn't already packaged?

1750

There is no doubt in my mind that this transportation plan for the province of Ontario is probably one of the most important policy issues this government or any successive government will have to deal with. It deals not only with our quality of life; it deals with the economic impact. There isn't a person in this province who is not affected by the gridlock we are experiencing in the greater Toronto area and in many other parts of the province. We have a great deal of work to do, and it needs to be done in a way that is efficient and takes into consideration the various regional issues. I hope we'll hear from the minister regarding his provincial transportation strategy.

I want to also commend the minister and the government for assigning to the GTTA the responsibility to develop a common fare system. It's referred to in the legislation as a "unified fare system," under section 7. It is absolutely true, and the minister will know, that the former government, and I, in my capacity as transportation minister, supported this. We already had a pilot project under development with GO Transit to develop a smart card system. The objective of that smart card system, of course, is to facilitate a unified fare card. I am interested to know what the status of that is, and from seeing it in this legislation now, I'm assuming that has been a successful exercise. I think anything we can do to streamline and make it easier for people to access public transit is our responsibility. One of the reasons people don't use transit is because it's too complicated for them. They're not sure when they can get access to a bus or a train, and then the fare system sometimes is complicated. It's a lot easier for people to say, "I'll forget all this and drive my car."

Anything we can do to make it attractive for the consumer to use public transit, I support. I support the unified fare system; I think it's the right thing to do. We look forward to seeing that happen.

I'm running out of time. I know there's five minutes to go. I have so much more to say. I wonder if I can get unanimous consent for me to have another hour to carry on.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Klees:** It's agreed. On that basis, I'll carry on.

I want to ask the minister—

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Klees, you have four minutes to go.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you. I want everyone watching to know that members of the Legislature agreed unanimously to give me the hour. The Speaker is denying it. He's limiting me—

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm not denying it. This day: It's today we're dealing with.

**Mr. Klees:** I'll have to squeeze into four minutes what I would otherwise say in an hour. This is going to be difficult.

I want to draw attention to the issue of how the minister intends to create this transition, because this legislation now is dissolving GO Transit and effectively folding the responsibility for the operation of GO Transit into the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

My concern here is that if we want this body to be the planning body, to load it up at the front end with operational responsibilities that are currently the responsibility of GO Transit—and, quite frankly, I think they're doing a great job—I would ask the minister to consider allowing this GTTA to do its business as a priority and not burden it with the responsibility of GO Transit operational responsibilities at the outset. If at some point it gets folded in, then that may well be fine.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Agreed. That's what I said.

**Mr. Klees:** I hear the minister saying he agrees, and I'm encouraged by that. That's good. I was concerned when I read this, because I really believe that the priority



for this organization has to be the planning and the implementation.

Finally, it all comes down to money. While I see provisions here for the authority to have the responsibility of funding and developing funding or creating a mechanism for funding, at the end of the day, if the Minister of Transportation does not have the support of Management Board and cabinet to ensure that the funding is available, then again we're back to where my colleague from Hamilton East made her point, and that is that we have merely empty rhetoric here without any hope of seeing any substantive result.

I'll be looking forward, over the course of further debate and perhaps in committee, to finding out what the government's plan is for funding of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. If we can deal with some of these issues that I have raised, I'll be the first one to support the minister in attempting to bring this matter forward. I believe, in the final analysis, in principle it's the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being approximately 6 p.m. on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, May 8, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

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## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

Mr. McNeely .....	3585
Mr. Sterling .....	3586
Mr. Levac .....	3586
Mr. Leal.....	3586
Mrs. Witmer .....	3596
Mr. Takhar .....	3596

### Business of the House

Mr. Caplan .....	3599
------------------	------

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Jeudi 4 mai 2006**

### AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Loi de 2006 sur le Fonds de développement économique de l'Est de l'Ontario, projet de loi 42, <i>M. Sterling</i></b>	
Adoptée.....	3583
<b>Loi de 2006 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie, projet de loi 79, <i>M. Lalonde</i></b>	
<i>M. Lalonde</i> .....	3577, 3582
Adoptée.....	3583

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi Bob Shaw de 2006 modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail, projet de loi 111, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Horwath</i></b>	
Adoptée.....	3586
<b>Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du poisson et de la faune, projet de loi 112, <i>M. Miller</i></b>	
Adoptée.....	3586

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2006 sur la Régie des transports du grand Toronto, projet de loi 104, <i>M. Takhar</i></b>	
Débat présumé ajourné.....	3623

# CONTENTS

Thursday 4 May 2006

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

<b>Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Act, 2006, Bill 42, Mr. Sterling</b>	
Mr. Sterling .....	3569, 3576
Mr. Marchese .....	3570
Mr. Brownell .....	3572
Mr. Runciman .....	3573
Mr. Leal .....	3574
Mr. Yakabuski .....	3575
Ms. Scott .....	3575
Agreed to .....	3583
<b>Trillium Gift of Life Network Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006, Bill 79, Mr. Lalonde</b>	
Mr. Lalonde .....	3577, 3582
Mr. Klees .....	3577
Mr. Tabuns .....	3579
Mr. Smitherman .....	3580
Ms. Smith .....	3581
Mr. Levac .....	3582
Agreed to .....	3583

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Tobacco growers</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	3583
<b>Molson Canada</b>	
Mr. Qaadri .....	3583
<b>Driver licences</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	3584
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	
Mr. Kormos .....	3584
<b>Sultan Jessa</b>	
Mr. Brownell .....	3584
<b>Farmers' markets</b>	
Mr. Runciman .....	3584
<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Mrs. Mitchell .....	3585
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. McNeely .....	3585
<b>Peterborough economy</b>	
Mr. Leal .....	3585

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Bob Shaw), 2006, Bill 111, Ms. Horwath</b>	
Agreed to .....	3586
Ms. Horwath .....	3586

## Fish and Wildlife Conservation

<b>Amendment Act, 2006, Bill 112, Mr. Miller</b>	
Agreed to .....	3586
Mr. Miller .....	3586

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	3586
Mr. McGuinty .....	3586
<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Runciman .....	3587
Mr. McGuinty .....	3587
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	3588
Mr. McGuinty .....	3588
<b>Tenant protection</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	3589
Mr. McGuinty .....	3589
<b>Municipal elections</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	3590
Mr. McGuinty .....	3590
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	3591
Mr. Peters .....	3591
<b>Driver licences</b>	
Mr. Balkissoon .....	3591
Mr. Takhar .....	3592
<b>Student immunization</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	3592
Ms. Pupatello .....	3592
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	3592
Mr. McGuinty .....	3593
<b>Native land dispute</b>	
Mr. Levac .....	3593
Mr. Ramsay .....	3593
<b>Amateur sport</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	3593
Mr. Watson .....	3594
Mr. Hampton .....	3594
<b>Smoking cessation</b>	
Mr. Wong .....	3595
Mr. Watson .....	3595
<b>Tourism</b>	
Mr. Arnott .....	3595
Mr. Bradley .....	3595

## PETITIONS

<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	3596
Mr. Tabuns .....	3596
Mr. Runciman .....	3597
Mr. Hardeman .....	3598
Mr. Ruprecht .....	3599
<b>Identity theft</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht .....	3596
<b>Highway 26</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	3597
<b>Colorectal cancer</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	3597
<b>Public transportation</b>	
Mr. Berardinetti .....	3597, 3598
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Berardinetti .....	3598
<b>Driver penalties</b>	
Ms. Scott .....	3598
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	3598
<b>Highway 35</b>	
Ms. Scott .....	3599
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	3599

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006, Bill 104, Mr. Takhar</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	3600, 3602
Mr. Chudleigh .....	3601
Ms. Horwath .....	3602, 3613, 3613
3617, 3618, 3620	
Mr. Berardinetti .....	3602
Mr. Klees .....	3602, 3617, 3620
Mr. O'Toole .....	3603, 3613
Mr. Hampton .....	3612, 3620
Mr. Takhar .....	3612
Ms. Scott .....	3612
Mr. Racco .....	3615, 3617
Mr. Chudleigh .....	3616, 3619
Mr. Wong .....	3617
Mr. Balkissoon .....	3619
Mr. Peterson .....	3620
Debate deemed adjourned .....	3623

Continued overleaf





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# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 8 May 2006

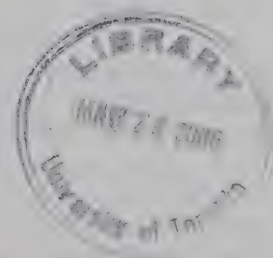
Lundi 8 mai 2006

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Honourable Michael A. Brown

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 8 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 8 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### WEARING OF PINS

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Monday, May 8, today, is World Red Cross Day. As a sign of our support for the Red Cross here in Ontario, Canada, and indeed around the world, of the good works that the Canadian Red Cross does, I seek unanimous consent to wear the red pin, the Red Cross, for the day. Pins have been supplied to all parties on both sides of the House. I'd appreciate unanimous consent.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Levac has asked for unanimous consent to wear a pin commemorating World Red Cross Day. Agreed? Agreed.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the 2,300 employees at the Darlington nuclear generating station in my riding of Durham. Darlington had its best year in 2005, increasing its capacity factor to 90%. This makes Darlington the best-performing nuclear plant in all of Canada. Last year, Darlington produced 17% of all the electricity used in Ontario. Imagine: That is enough supply for almost one out of every five farms, factories, businesses and homes. Almost one fifth of Ontario's power supply comes from my riding.

In Durham region and Durham riding, we're home to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. We have the knowledge, the skills, the training and the technology to do more, and we're ready. Ontario is only waiting for this government to show some leadership and initiative in building a safe, clean, available and affordable power supply for the future. The energy expertise in Durham riding and Durham region is one of the keys to reaching this goal.

I would like to congratulate Gregory Smith, senior vice-president of Darlington Nuclear, and his entire team. We wish them continued success in a climate where the Ministry of Energy—and the minister specifically—seems to lack a plan for the future to have a reliable, affordable, sustainable and safe source of electricity, which is the generator of this economy in Ontario. They

have no plan. Please turn their eyes to the Darlington nuclear plant. There's more to be done, and they're prepared to do it.

### JASMEET SIDHU

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** I'm delighted to rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Jasmeet Sidhu on receiving the TD Canada Trust scholarship for community leadership. Ms. Sidhu is a member of my riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. Each year, only 20 young people across Canada receive the TD Canada Trust scholarship for outstanding and consistent leadership in striving to improve their respective communities.

Ms. Sidhu's long list of accomplishments is both inspiring and ambitious. She has created the Peel Environmental Youth Alliance, which helps connect environmentally conscious teenagers together in her community. Under her remarkable leadership, the Peel Environmental Youth Alliance has helped to create several new recycling programs and environmental clubs across the region. Ms. Sidhu is also involved in the award-winning environmental club she founded at Heart Lake Secondary School, and she has represented about 75,000 senior elementary and secondary school students as student trustee for the Peel District School Board. Ms. Sidhu's impressive community involvement plays an important role in bringing this government's environmental initiatives to fruition.

It's truly an honour and a privilege to have Ms. Sidhu as a part of the Brampton community, as well as such an integral part of Ontario. Her leadership and dedication to her community is an example to all of us.

### MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** Ontarians continue to pay more and get less service from this government. The Bracebridge MNR office in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka is among those that no longer offer counter service. This began on April 1, 2006. In addition, there's been no increase in staff locally to assist the ServiceOntario office in delivering additional MNR services. MNR offices in Parry Sound–Muskoka are in high demand. For instance, due to the large number of seasonal property owners, access to biologists is imperative to assist with invasive-species identification, like the Asian long-horned beetle and the emerald ash borer.

Also, certain maps will only be available through the Peterborough office.

Sport fishing brings significant tourism dollars to the province, yet MNR is cutting back on fish stocking, despite calls for an additional \$25 million by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters for fish and wildlife programming.

I would like to quote from a recent letter to the editor by Ron McIntosh from Bracebridge: "There has been a dramatic decline in the ability of the MNR to fulfill its mandate. Fish hatcheries have been closed, invasive species programs cut back, fish-stocking programs gutted, offices downsized or closed."

A couple months ago, the Parry Sound MNR aviation and forest service office was relocated. It's obvious to me and to other Ontarians that natural resources is not a priority with this government.

### ESL FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to provide some statistical information around English-as-a-second-language programs. The early numbers from the 2005-06 elementary tracking report show that, province-wide, 56% of schools have ESL students, compared to 48% in 1999-2000; 36% of schools have ESL programs, down from 58% in 1997-98; 27% of the schools have ESL teachers, a steady decline from 41% in 1998-99.

In schools with ESL students, 51% reported they have no ESL teachers, compared to 33% in 1999-2000. Further, 71% of all of Ontario's ESL students are in the GTA. Only 51% of GTA schools have ESL teachers, a decline from 55% last year and 68% in 1999-2000.

This speaks very, very poorly of this government, not to speak of the previous government. People had such high hopes that the Liberals would solve this, and yet we've seen a steady decline under them. Numerous reports in the last two years, including one from Ontario's Auditor General, have called for changes to ESL funding, but as yet little has changed. I hope things will change in the near future.

1340

### STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** Last Wednesday, I had the privilege of attending the If I Had A Million Dollars gala dinner and salute to York region's youth in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. I'm very happy to report that the sum of \$960,000 was raised. I'd also like to highlight that \$250,000 of that came from York region's youth campaigns.

I wish to recognize and thank the honorary co-chair of the gala dinner, Newmarket-Aurora MP Belinda Stronach; Steven Page and the rest of the Barenaked Ladies band for their musical contribution and support; our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman; York region committee co-chairs Mary Anna and Charles Beer and Steve Falk; Steven Paikin, host of our favourite show, TVO's 4th Reading, for

offering to play emcee for another year; special guest Lionel Davis of South Africa; and of course Stephen Lewis, who has brought life and hope to the millions affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa.

I'm so very proud of the contributions and accomplishments of York region's residents and youth, and of this government for providing \$80,000 in annual funding for the AIDS Committee of York Region, which I had the honour of announcing last year, to improve the lives and conditions of people living with HIV/AIDS in York region.

By extending the borders of our compassion, we can help ease the pain brought by HIV/AIDS together.

### HOCKEYVILLE

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** The CBC was back in Barry's Bay on the weekend, yes siree, to film another segment for the Kraft CBC series Hockeyville. It leaves little doubt as to who is going to be crowned Hockeyville, Canada, on June 11, I believe it is. It is clearly shaping up to be a rout on behalf of Barry's Bay.

The CBC was so impressed with what they saw on Saturday, where hundreds of people turned out to support the village's bid for Hockeyville. There was a big scavenger hunt that took them from the community centre to the Zurakowsky Park and on to the new parking lot at the new Loeb's. It was very, very impressive. It was then followed up yesterday by a community barbecue in support of the Hockeyville bid where young Michael Papania and Father Grant Neville were the stars in a video that was being filmed about the efforts, which will be forwarded on to CBC and the Kraft Hockeyville committee.

The momentum is growing all across the valley and all across the province. I know there are some other places in this contest, but I want you to just admit it: Barry's Bay is going to be the winner. Get behind it 100%. Let's have Hockeyville Barry's Bay on June 11.

### EXCHANGE STUDENTS

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I rise today to introduce the Legislature to a group of students who attend John Herdman Collegiate in Corner Brook—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Patten:** Can you hang on a minute—Newfoundland, and Toronto students and staff from the YMCA. They're in the west gallery. They are being hosted by the YMCA Academy. The academy is an alternative school, is managed by the YMCA of Greater Toronto and serves students between grade 9 and grade 11.

The federal government's Youth Exchanges Canada provides funding to support homestay exchanges. Through their exchanges, students recognize and appreciate our country's rich diversity of culture, language, communities, geography, history and economy.

As a former staff person with the YMCA for over 22 years, it's with some pride that I note the exchange



program holds true to the spirit and the mission of the Y, enabling young people to learn from each other, to respect different cultures—to listen to each other when statements are being made—while developing communication and leadership skills.

Welcome. We hope you enjoy your visit to Queen's Park. The time that you will be spending here in Toronto with YMCA staff and students we hope is meaningful. Thank you for coming and adding your wonderful spirit to this place and to our province. When you return home to Newfoundland, may you find that this experience has increased your motivation to build a strong future for Newfoundland and Canada and all its people.

### POLICE VEHICLES

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** Last week, I visited DaimlerChrysler Canada to watch the delivery of a fleet of 15 new, specially equipped Dodge Charger vehicles to Peel Regional Police from their Brampton assembly plant. I was extremely proud to see that the Dodge Charger police package, built by men and women in Brampton, will be used to protect our community. Peel Regional Police now have some of the most technologically advanced vehicles used in law enforcement.

The new Charger is a highly specialized vehicle which has been designed and developed to be utilized specifically for police service applications only. In addition to the enhanced engine and suspension abilities, the Dodge Charger package also provides the power, functionality and handling that are needed for law enforcement.

It is my understanding that there are eight different police forces within Canada that are utilizing these vehicles. This delivery to Peel Regional Police Service represents the largest single delivery to any police service in Canada thus far.

My congratulations to DaimlerChrysler for returning to their police car heritage and delivering a vehicle which will help local police serve and protect the city of Brampton and Peel.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** Statistics show that 96% of elementary and secondary students in Perth county have received all the vaccines recommended for their age. I concur with Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, our local Perth county medical officer of health, when she said, "It's great to see that Perth county children are well protected against many serious illnesses."

This is no coincidence. Since being elected, the McGuinty government has phased in new, free child vaccination programs for chicken pox, meningitis and pneumococcal disease. The plan is projected to see some two million Ontario children vaccinated without charge by the end of 2006-07, saving Ontario families approximately \$600 per child for all three vaccines. For a young family with two children, that's a saving of \$1,200; for a

family with three, that's a saving of \$1,800, etc. It's no surprise that our progress has now made Ontario a leader in North America in protecting children against vaccine-preventable diseases.

At this time, I'd also like to take the opportunity to commend the Perth district health unit for embracing the vision of health care we share with them and with all Ontarians and making it a reality. I'd also like to thank all the health care professionals in Perth–Middlesex and our government's commitment to public health for making my riding a leader in the delivery of all public services.

I take the last few seconds to say to my colleagues that we have a visitor today, a young Mr. David Betancourt from Colombia. He's a Rotary exchange student visiting our great province and living in Stratford. We welcome you here, David.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and move its adoption.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2006, the bill is ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE (HAMILTON) ACT, 2006

Ms. Marsales moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr18, An Act respecting Ronald McDonald House (Hamilton).

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i),

the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, May 8, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.*

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 131. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Peterson, Tim
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Klees, Frank	Racco, Mario G.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Broten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Tory, John
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Norm	Watson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	O'Toole, John	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	Patten, Richard	Yakubski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter
Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 62; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### NURSING WEEK

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Mr. Speaker, as you and members of this assembly are aware, today marks the beginning of Nursing Week. This marks an occasion to celebrate the remarkable work done by our province's nurses, but it's also an opportunity for us—for all of us—to reflect on what still needs to be done.

I'd like to take a moment to commend our province's nurses, and I'd like to advise all members of this assembly of an important announcement I made this morning to help address our nursing shortage and to keep more nursing graduates here in Ontario.

Let me begin by expressing to all of our nurses our profound appreciation and our gratitude. You truly are the front line of health care, carrying out vital functions, providing support to other health professionals and, most important, providing care to our patients. Your work is often done under extraordinarily challenging conditions, yet you perform your duties with professionalism, with energy, with grace and with compassion. I know I speak on behalf of all members of this House, and indeed all Ontarians, when I say to the nurses of Ontario: thank you.

Our government recognizes the crucial role that you perform, and we also know that this recognition has not always existed.

We've worked hard during our time in office to make life better for Ontario's nurses and to ensure that more nurses choose to pursue their careers here in Ontario. We've invested more than \$50 million for hospitals to purchase nursing and patient safety equipment, like bed lifts, safety engineered sharps and alarm systems; we've provided an additional \$89 million to hospitals and long-term-care homes for the purchase of patient- and resident-lifting equipment; we've committed \$50 million for full-time nursing positions in hospitals; and we've attached strong and measurable accountability requirements to ensure that the money goes, and stays, where it's intended.

In the past two years, we've invested more than \$87 million in our comprehensive nursing strategy. This money was earmarked to hire new graduate nurses into temporary supernumerary positions to allow for better orientation and transition to the workforce. We've earmarked money to support our late-career nurses to work a portion of their time in a less physically demanding role. We've created nurse-mentoring programs, and we've purchased clinical simulation equipment to provide our nursing students with hands-on practice in simulated environments. This funding supported practical nursing programs as well as collaborative programs.

We've provided \$1 million this year, an amount that will increase to \$4 million in 2007-08, to support a nursing faculty fund.

All of these steps have helped to create a better working environment for nurses, and today we took one more important step forward. This morning I had the privilege of announcing our government's commitment that every nursing graduate in Ontario will be offered a full-time job somewhere in this province. We want to keep all of our new nursing graduates here in Ontario, providing care to Ontarians. That's why we're offering this job guarantee to every nursing graduate.

Beginning in 2007, the 4,000 students expected to graduate will be offered a full-time opportunity somewhere within our vast public health care system. We



can't offer everyone their first choice in terms of job placement, but we can and will offer every nursing graduate a full-time job, whether it's in the hospital sector, long-term care, home care, public health or the primary care sector.

This initiative is part of our HealthForceOntario human resources strategy that we launched last week. I'm delighted that Tom Closson, the former president and CEO of the University Health Network, has agreed to head the task force developing the implementation details of this initiative.

This represents one more step in our effort to address Ontario's nursing shortage and in fulfilling our commitment to hire 8,000 new nurses. I'm extremely proud of this initiative.

Once again, I'm proud to have this opportunity to acknowledge and to celebrate our province's nurses as we mark Nursing Week.

### ARTS EDUCATION

**Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture):** As the Minister of Culture, I have been given the responsibility of developing a strategy to promote arts education in Ontario's public schools. I'd like to thank my parliamentary assistant for culture, Jennifer Mossop, for her work in the past two years. It's with her and Kathleen Wynne's help, the parliamentary assistant for education, and in partnership with the Minister of Education, that this government plans to enhance arts education in our schools.

The term "arts education" is synonymous with excellence and all the best in shaping our children's education. We know this intuitively, we know it anecdotally and we know it empirically. Studies have shown that young people who participate in arts and music not only have higher math and science scores but are also better problem solvers.

Creativity and innovation are the new markers of success in an economy that is increasingly moving towards knowledge-intensive industries. Exceptional scientists, engineers, architects, entertainers, high-tech workers and business people all share important skills: the ability to apply new, innovative approaches to old problems and to try something radically new.

Innovation and creative thinking is what we want to teach our young people in the 21st century. We want to provide them with the kind of education that engages them, inspires them and teaches them to think for themselves. A focus on creativity through the arts will ensure our children get the well-rounded education they need to succeed in our complex and rapidly changing world.

That's why the Ontario government, under Premier McGuinty's leadership, is launching a new \$4-million program to promote arts education in our communities and schools, the arts education partnership initiative. This will bring the provincial investment in arts education over the last two years to \$25 million.

The arts education partnership initiative is an incentive program that will encourage private sector support to

achieve three important goals: to encourage our children to participate and learn about the arts, like painting, music, singing, theatre and dance; to help classroom teachers use the arts to give their students a better understanding of other subjects, like math or science; and to help build partnerships between arts organizations and their communities.

We want to provide students with the skills they need to achieve higher grades in all subjects and to develop their ability to create, adapt and think on their own.

The province also continues to fund the Royal Conservatory of Music's learning through the arts program, providing \$6 million over five years. This program uses art and music to teach subjects like math, science, history and geography. Whether it's learning math through dance, science through sculpture or learning how to deal with bullying through theatrical production, our students benefit significantly from this kind of exposure to the arts.

I'd like to highlight for you some of our exciting new initiatives in support of arts and education that my government in Ontario is also very proud of: \$10 million from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in the past two years to fund our young people's participation in arts initiatives across the province; \$4 million through the Ontario Arts Council in its world-renowned arts education programs; 2,000 new specialist teachers in our schools, including arts, music and teacher librarians; and arts programs and exhibits offered to our students by Ontario's cultural agencies through the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum, that stimulate the imagination of hundreds of thousands of students every year.

This significant financial investment illustrates that our government values the role of the arts in our education system and in our communities, both to help our children learn about the arts and through the arts.

The Ontario government, under Premier Dalton McGuinty, gets it. We know that arts education isn't a nicety; it's a necessity. The arts not only raise academic achievement in all areas. They also help children stay in school by engaging their imagination; increase their self-confidence and their self-esteem; increase their creativity and problem-solving skills; engage children who are not reaching their potential, including those with learning disabilities; and provide positive direction for children and youth heading for trouble.

We know there's a lot of rebuilding to do in this sector because of many years of neglect. I also know that this is not a panacea, but I am proud of this tangible step that we're taking to invest in arts education.

This past Friday, I had the opportunity to join the Premier, the Minister of Education and our respective parliamentary assistants on a visit to Palmerston Avenue Public School to celebrate arts education. I was gratified by the passion, joy and enthusiasm the principal, teachers and students of that school showed for the arts. Their commitment to improving the level and quality of arts education in their school is inspirational. We want to see



this kind of enthusiasm in every school across the province. Our vision is to ensure that because of arts education, students across the province are achieving higher grades, improving their self-esteem and better preparing themselves for the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Responses? 1410

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** I'm pleased to respond to the statement by the Minister of Culture. I think all of us recognize that the key to our future—the success of our children and grandchildren—is certainly in developing skills in the areas of innovation and creativity. As we look at a knowledge-based society with increased globalization and therefore constant ability to communicate, innovation and creativity are keys to that future.

One of the initiatives from our government that I am particularly proud of was the funding for organizations like Artslink in York region. Artslink York Region believes that arts and culture are integral to healthy communities. Artslink's mission is to foster and promote the spirit of creativity in York region. Artslink is a regional arts program that promotes and financially supports a learning partnership between York community artists and schools.

The Trillium Foundation approved funding for the establishment of an arts council in late 2002, and this organization then developed into the Artslink organization, led by its very capable executive director, Virginia Hackson, who is a councillor with the town of East Gwillimbury.

Artslink encourages student involvement in culture by sponsoring such programs as Artslink Music Alive, with over 60 sessions in various communities in York region. This year they have expanded into the world of drama with the Artslink Drama Alive Festival, which gives students experience performing in front of a live audience. Their Visual Arts Alive program displays banners designed by student teams from kindergarten to grade 12 representing their elementary, secondary or private school in York region.

Artslink is only one example of the PC Party's commitment to culture and to including our young people as full participants.

#### NURSING WEEK

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** Here we have another week and another announcement by the Minister of Health.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Witmer:** Before they cheer too loud, they should take note of the fact that this is another announcement just like last week, and the one about the LHINs and the family health teams, without any detail, without any dates, without any timelines and of course, most importantly, no dollars. No one has any idea as to how this government is going to achieve the objectives. In fact, when the minister was scrummed this morning, he

acknowledged as much. How will this increase the number of positions? He didn't have an answer. What are the periods of time within which the job offers will be guaranteed? He didn't have an answer. Is this task force some kind of hiring agency? Oh, he didn't want to get into the nitty-gritty just yet. Why bother with details when you can stand up and make announcement after announcement without any substance whatsoever?

I would say to the minister that we have a very proud record as far as recruiting and hiring health human resources. Our government, working with the health stakeholders, saw the creation of 12,000 additional nurses in Ontario. We created the nurse practitioner position. We announced the new medical school in northern Ontario. We are very proud that we were able to work with all those health stakeholders in order to ensure that people in this province would have increased access to health care professionals.

I want to conclude my remarks, in this the week that is devoted to nursing, by simply extending my sincere congratulations and appreciation, on behalf of John Tory and our party, to all the nurses in Ontario for the work they do, no matter where they work. Whether it's in a hospital, on the front lines, on the street, in public health, in long-term care or in community care, we very much value and appreciate their professionalism, their caring, their dedication and their compassion for their patients. We certainly look forward to continuing to work with our nursing partners. Many of us are going to be visiting and seeing first-hand the role of our nurses this week, and we look forward to that opportunity.

#### ARTS EDUCATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** I was lucky to have been at Palmerston Public School last Friday to bear witness to the hyper-inflated display of minimalist announcement. Indeed, the Premier was there. The Minister of Education was there. The Minister of Culture; the member from Stoney Creek, the parliamentary assistant; and the member from Don Valley West—they were all there and they all talked so beautifully about the value of culture and the arts in general, about the contribution those make to individual growth and cultural and community development. I thought, “This is beautiful. I'm waiting for the big announcement,” only to be let down by a \$4-million announcement, jointly done by the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Education, and they are matching dollars.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Mr. Bradley claps at this: a \$4-million announcement of matching dollars. Imagine all the bake sales that the folks in Mr. Bradley's riding are going to have to be able to raise all this money so that they can have a few cultural programs in some of these schools. I'm looking forward to all the big, big, big bake sales they are going to have to be able to match this big \$4 million.

That was the announcement. That was it—such an important announcement. I was seated there, waiting for



the big, big dollars to come down. I can't tell you how much in disbelief I was: \$4 million, matching funds. You know, Mr. Bradley and others, that we have had a drop in music and art teachers of 20% in the last eight years. This doesn't add one music teacher to our schools—not one; not one cent. They speak proudly of what they've done and they talk about 2,000 new specialist teachers in our schools, including arts and music. I challenge the Minister of Education, who's here, and the Minister of Culture to show me how many new teachers we've got who are music teachers and art teachers, and then we can talk about how good you have been in the last three years.

#### NURSING WEEK

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** During Nursing Week, my colleagues and I salute Ontario nurses for the tremendous work that they do in our system. They provide excellent high-quality care in Ontario hospitals. All floors are at all capacities in long-term-care homes, in long-term care, in home care, in community health centres and in public health units. I'd like to thank them at the start for their commitment, their dedication, their hard work and their incredible contribution to Ontario's health care system.

With respect to the announcement made today, why would any Ontario family, nurse or graduating nurse believe anything the McGuinty government has to say with respect to nurses, given their absolute failure to live up to the promises they made with respect to nurses during the election campaign? This is a government that promised 70% of registered nurses would have full-time employment in the province of Ontario. In 2005, that figure was 60%, three years into this government's mandate, after three budgets and after a \$3-billion wind-fall. They haven't lived up to that promise. This is a government that promised 8,000 new nurses in the province of Ontario. If you look at the government's own figures, to date, the government has hired 3,052.

It's interesting to note that 1,100 of those are new graduate internship positions that the nursing secretariat describes as "temporary full-time positions for nurses that have graduated in the last 12 months. At the discretion of the employer, these positions may last three to six months." This government uses 1,000 of these three-to-six-month positions to claim that it's hired 8,000 new nurses.

Also, this is a government that said 1,000 nurses had been hired in Ontario hospitals, and then several weeks after making that claim, the minister announced that he had given the approval for hospitals to lay off 757 nurses. At the estimates in September, I asked the ministry how many of those nurses been laid off. The ministry had no idea.

We know that more nurses have been laid off as hospitals tried to meet their deadline from the ministry in March 2006. Now we've done an FOI to the ministry to find out how many nurses have been laid off, because there's no doubt in my mind that they have been and that

the government's numbers about nursing positions in hospitals are very skewed.

Finally, what's really astonishing about the announcement today is that this province is facing a crisis with respect to a shortage of registered nurses. Linda Haslam-Stroud said last week that up to 30,000 RNs are going to retire by 2008. We'd better have a place for those 4,000 graduates in 2007; we'd better have a place for 4,000 and a whole lot more, because we are not going to have enough registered nurses to deal with patient care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.  
1420

#### VISITOR

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm very pleased to be able to introduce to the House today a retired principal from St. Angela's school in Windsor, Sister Shirley McCauley, my former principal. I'm very happy to have her introduced today. Welcome to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### JOHN ATKINSON

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize a fallen police officer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes on a fallen police officer. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It is with great sadness that I rise in this House today on behalf of the government and the Legislature to pay tribute to Senior Constable John Atkinson and offer our heartfelt sympathies to his family for the loss of a loving husband and father.

John was a 14-year veteran of the Windsor Police Service and was tragically killed, as all members know, on Friday, and taken away from all of us far too soon. I know that myself and everyone in our community, and in fact across Ontario, has felt the loss of this outstanding police officer and community member, for Officer Atkinson truly demonstrated the best of qualities in all of his roles.

He was obviously fiercely proud of his community and looked after his neighbourhood not only in his professional capacity but also frequently on his personal time. Over his 14-year career, he received over 35 letters of recognition for a job well done and letters of appreciation from the public, as well as six divisional commendations for his initiative, dedication to duty and excellence in police work. He was an individual who took his responsibilities very seriously 24 hours a day.



The fact that Officer Atkinson was murdered is a tragedy in and of itself, but the fact that he was reaching out to protect his community, indeed his own neighbourhood, makes it even more tragic. Every Ontarian owes John a debt of gratitude for the values and principles he stood for. Windsorites are still in shock, as I know Ontarians are across the province.

I want to take a moment to pay tribute to the thousands of men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect and enhance our communities. I think sometimes we take it for granted. Unfortunately, Officer Atkinson's death reminds us so vividly of how dangerous this work can be. Our police officers across Ontario are true public servants, and we all owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Our hearts go out to John's wife, Shelley, and their two children, Nicole and Mitchell. None of us here can know exactly what they are going through at this time, but I do want to express to them on behalf of this House the deep sorrow we share and our deep gratitude for the bravery, service and spirit of community shown by their husband and father.

I don't know that there are words strong or eloquent enough to capture the courage it takes to put one's self in harm's way in order to keep others safe, just as I don't know that there are words to describe what a partner, a son or daughter, a friend or a fellow officer goes through when forced to pick one's self up and carry on without their spouse, their parent or their colleague in policing. All I can say is that it is with the greatest of respect that I say thank you, John Atkinson, and thank you to all the police officers who make the ultimate sacrifice. We thank them and we thank their families for the love and support they provide to our police day in and day out.

Officer Atkinson will be missed, but more important, he will be remembered. He will be remembered as a servant of his community; he will be remembered as a thoroughly decent police officer. He will be remembered. His memory will be cherished by his entire community, but most important, he will be remembered as a father and a husband. We offer our deepest sympathies to his family.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Last Friday, as police services from across Ontario prepared for the police memorial here at Queen's Park on Sunday, a veteran Windsor police officer was brutally murdered in the line of duty. Senior Constable John Atkinson, a 37-year-old, 14-year veteran of the Windsor Police Service, was a plainclothes officer who happened to respond to an incident that tragically took his life from him.

Any time a police officer leaves his or her home to serve the public and perform in the line of duty, they understand the danger and possible consequences. However, when we learn of an officer making the supreme sacrifice, we begin to realize what officers and their families are subjected to, day in and day out.

John Atkinson was married to his wife, Shelley, for 17 years, and they had two beautiful children: seven-year-old Nicole and nine-year-old Mitchell. John had received 35 letters of recognition and six divisional commen-

dations for his excellence in police work and dedication to his job. On behalf of John Tory, the PC caucus and all Ontarians, I'd like to extend our deepest condolences to Shelley, Nicole and Mitchell, and to all the extended Atkinson family, both those related and those in police services throughout the province. We thank John for contributing to the safety and security of his hometown of Windsor and to the beautiful province of Ontario.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Today we recognize the sacrifice of Senior Constable John Atkinson of the Windsor Police Service, who died in the line of duty on Friday, May 5.

For 14 years, Senior Constable Atkinson undertook a very noble task. He donned a police uniform every day, putting himself in harm's way to keep his community safe. He was a good cop. He did his job with distinction. Over his 14-year career, he received 35 letters of recognition for a job well done, letters of appreciation from the public, and six divisional commendations for his initiative, his dedication to duty and his excellence in police work.

Sadly, on Friday, Senior Constable Atkinson was taken from his community, from the job he loved, from his friends and from his family, shot and killed in a senseless act of violence in the very neighbourhood he calls home. He was only 37 years old.

Windsor's chief of police has said that John Atkinson "was just a good person first, and a good police officer. He was an absolute credit to our community. He and his wife were—it's a tragic story—high school sweethearts. They grew up in that neighbourhood, lived in that neighbourhood," and now he has been, "killed in that neighbourhood. A tragedy."

The loss reminds all of us of how dangerous police work can be and how critical it is that we do all we can to help them.

Today is a day to mourn the loss of one of Ontario's finest. We send our deepest, sincerest condolences to the people of Windsor, to Constable Atkinson's grieving colleagues in the Windsor Police Service and, most importantly, to Constable Atkinson's wife, Shelley, his son, Mitchell, who is nine years old, and his daughter, Nicole, who turns seven years old today. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Of Constable Atkinson, we must say, thank you for 14 years of dedicated service to your community, thank you for putting yourself in harm's way every day to protect your community, thank you for making the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I would ask that all members and guests rise and observe a moment of silence for Constable John Atkinson.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

1430

VE DAY

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent for all



parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize VE Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize Victory in Europe Day. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** We join today with all Ontarians and with millions around the world to mark the 61st anniversary of VE Day: May 8, 1945. This is a day of celebration, a day on which to commemorate the victory over intolerance and tyranny, but it is also a day for deep reflection. We cannot help but remember the terrible cost to gain freedom and remember those who sacrificed their lives so that we might enjoy that freedom today.

Some 10% of Canada's population served in the Second World War. More than 54,000 were wounded, approximately 9,000 were taken as prisoners of war, and well over 42,000 lost their lives. Ontario's young men and women experienced the brutality of war in North Africa, Italy, Holland, France and Germany, as well as on the Asian front.

Their contributions are remembered by many. The liberation of the Netherlands is celebrated each year, as it was in the early days of 1945, when the Dutch poured into the streets and danced with young Canadian soldiers who had come to free them from oppression and fear. There is a forest of maple trees in the city of Groningen, the Liberation Forest, which was dedicated with a poem that reads, "To commemorate them we dedicate a forest yet / Maple leaves fell for us, lest we forget."

For many Ontarians, these events are the realities our parents lived through, and so for the so-called baby boom generation these things are part of our own personal reality, even if we did not experience them directly. With each passing generation, however, we run the risk that these events will slide from shared reality to distant history and that our young people will lose sight of what was won, what was sacrificed and what these events truly meant in human terms.

There are today fewer than 100,000 veterans of the Second World War in Ontario. Even though the average age of these veterans is over 82, many remain active and involved and continue to give to their communities. My most fervent wish is that these generations find ways to share, to learn and to keep this vital memory alive.

That is why the government of Ontario, supported by all members of this Legislature, welcomed the opportunity to partner with the Dominion Institute to provide funding assistance for the Memory Project Road Show. The road show began last May. The road show visited eight cities and touched the lives of hundreds of veterans, their families and secondary school students across the province. In the end, the oral histories and personal memorabilia of 500 veterans living in Ontario have been collected and catalogued by experts.

This morning, Second World War veterans Pauline Hebb, George MacDonell and Alfred Hurley joined us at Leaside High School for the unveiling of the online archive.

The Memory Project Road Show has created a powerful and lasting way to honour veterans. On the front lawn of Queen's Park, in the place of highest honour, the veterans' memorial is being constructed. Generations to come will be reminded of the sacrifices of the men and women who fought so valiantly for our freedom and emerged triumphant. It is with deep gratitude to those who lost their lives and those who came home to us as veterans that I observe, on behalf of colleagues of mine and all Ontarians, VE Day, May 8, 1945.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** It is my privilege to rise respectfully in my place today to give solemn gratitude to the men and women who fought so valiantly for our freedom in World War II. Today, we mark the 61st anniversary of Victory in Europe Day as free citizens in a free country in this distinguished chamber. Today, we remember a day when brave souls from across Canada and around the world stood up to tyranny, stood up to hatred and stood up to oppression. And these brave souls triumphed. As Vice-Admiral Duncan Miller, chair of the Canadian Naval Memorial recalled, "Canadians were the heroes of this war, and still are from the European perspective, because that's how the war was won."

Yesterday, in the nation's capital, over 400 veterans and serving military officers remembered VE Day and the sacrifices and triumphs of the young men and women who served our country—in fact, all of the world—during the Battle of the Atlantic. No war has been fought without the deaths of brave men and women. Each victory is made bittersweet by the memory of those who died to protect us. Mere words cannot truly express the myriad feelings which Canadians have shared since that day 61 years ago, when individuals sacrificed so greatly, and the individual stories that rose from those sorrows and joys. Charlie Burgess, a veteran in his 80s who served during the Battle of the Atlantic, plainly recalled yesterday, "It was kind of rough, it was scary, but you had to live with it."

As members of this chamber pause today to remember the ultimate sacrifice made all too frequently in that great conflict, a sacrifice which will never be forgotten in Canada and in Europe, we reflect on how different our lives would be had they not stood up to tyranny and evil and had they not succeeded. We reflect on the world we live in and how it has been defined by defiance to that seemingly insurmountable force. We reflect not only on where we are but who we are, and how that conflict, as we as a people have stood up against it, has moulded our character and framed our vigilance. We reflect today on our freedom and our liberties, and we look toward a future that, because of sacrifices so long ago, is boundless with opportunities, embraces free will, and protects sovereignty over ourselves and our nation.

In closing, I would encourage all Canadians and Ontarians and every member of this Legislature to remember the sacrifices of the great men and women who served our country during conflicts around the world throughout our history, and in particular during World



War II, for it is only through their sacrifices that we have been given the opportunity to flourish as a strong nation and as strong individuals. I'm reminded of the great world leader Sir Winston Churchill, who cautioned, "A nation that forgets its past is doomed to repeat it."

1440

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Victory in Europe Day represents many different things to many people.

To young people, merely children, living in northern France, Belgium or the Netherlands, victory in Europe for many meant the first opportunity to taste something like a chocolate bar. It meant the first opportunity to be able to have three meals a day. It meant the first opportunity to be able to walk down the street or down the road in their local community without being challenged or without being subject to search, and in some cases deprivation.

Canadians need to remember the victory in Europe, but we also have much to celebrate in terms of the victory in Europe. Much of the history of Great Britain or the British history of the second war, much of the American history of the second war, was written early on. It was written in the late 1940s, the early 1950s. People like Eisenhower wrote their memoirs. Churchill, of course, wrote many books. Generals like Montgomery wrote their memoirs very soon after the war. Canadians, perhaps because we're a humble lot, perhaps because we tend to be quieter on the world stage, have only recently begun to write the history of what Canadians did, and it's a remarkable history. Mark Zuehlke, who is an academic and historian who lives on the west coast, has now written about five books in the last 10 years on the history of what Canadians did. Some of his research and what he has turned up is really quite remarkable.

In my hometown, there are several Canadians who are called the D-Day Dodgers because they fought most of the second war in Sicily and Italy. Mr. Zuehlke has just recently written a book about the Canadians in Italy, and there's one remarkable part where the German army had built a formidable line across the centre of Italy from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic coast. They called it the Hitler Line and they declared that it was invincible. But Mr. Zuehlke, in searching through the records of the German army, has actually found a memo from the head of intelligence of the German army in Italy at the time where he writes to his superiors in Berlin. He knows that the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the French and the Poles, who were all fighting in Italy, were preparing to attack, but he writes, "If I could only know where the Canadians are, then I know where the attack will happen." Indeed, when the attack on the Hitler Line finally came, it was the Canadians who led the breaking of the Hitler Line.

In northwest Europe, the work that Canadians did in Belgium and in Holland is perhaps some of the most formidable fighting that anyone could ever wish to think about. While the British army was given the plains of Europe and could use their tanks, and the American army

was given more or less the eastern side of France and could use their tanks, Canadians had to fight through all the canals, all the ditches, all the rivers, all the lowland, where you couldn't use tanks. You had to literally fight on the ground for every yard of earth, and in some cases every yard of mud. One of the most astounding things—and again, this is fairly recent history. Canadians actually took the surrender of the German army in northern Holland, and the lieutenant colonel of the Canadian army who picked up the commanding officer of the German army in northern Holland to escort him to the place where the peace treaty was going to be signed was immediately subjected to a barrage of questions by the commanding German officer, who was a professional soldier. He wanted to know what this lieutenant colonel had done before the war. Certainly he must have been a professional soldier? And the lieutenant colonel replied, "No, sir. I was a volunteer. I made ice cream before the war." That's also what's so incredible about Canadians: volunteers, virtually each and every one of them.

So we have much to remember and we also need to celebrate the incredible accomplishments of Canadians in Europe and the victory in Europe.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Last week, Alex Sundakov, a New Zealand economist, warned that your new drug reforms will pave the way for reference-based pricing in Ontario. As you know, Minister, reference-based pricing is a scheme by which the government pays for only the lowest-cost drug in a specific class, regardless of what the doctor has prescribed, and the patients are left to pick up the difference. To simplify, if a doctor wrote you a prescription for a four-door sedan, the government would cover the cost of a scooter and the patient gets the bill for the difference between the two. Patient groups have said that such a policy would have disastrous impacts on people across the province who are receiving health care from this government. Will you confirm whether or not your plan for Ontario will head us in the direction of reference-based pricing? Yes or no?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The answer to the honourable member is no.

**Mr. Tory:** I think that should go down on the record as the first one-word answer ever from this minister. But it's not satisfactory, unfortunately.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tory:** Well, that's fine.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Stop the clock. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** Unfortunately, there seems to be some discrepancy here that we have to pursue with that answer.



Last Wednesday, you were quoted, I guess somewhat consistently with what you just said in this House, in the Toronto Sun as saying, "This is not the slippery slope to reference-based pricing." However, I have here a cabinet document from your Ministry of Health. Here's what it says, here's what the document presented to the cabinet, dated March 30, says: "The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care identified offsets of \$286.5 million in the 2006-07 results-based plan. The offsets identified are as follows: reference-based pricing and generic pricing commitments are \$136.5 million for 2006-07 and \$150.8 million in each of 2007-08 and 2008-09."

This document clearly indicates that you and the McGuinty government are in fact going to be bringing reference-based pricing schemes in to foist them on to the patients of Ontario. Why do you insist on saying one thing publicly and here—

**The Speaker:** Response.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** With all due—  
*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're not even in your seat and you've got that bad habit again.

I want to say in very direct answer to the honourable member, the reference to reference-based pricing that is in cabinet documents is a reflection on the idea that it was a placeholder. There's no doubt whatsoever that at a point in time, as our government sought to evaluate how we should move forward on a review and policy decisions with respect to the drug system, reference-based pricing, something that has been brought in in other Canadian jurisdictions—most of them; eight, I believe—was something, no doubt, that we did consider. A placeholder was placed against that in a numeric equation.

Since then, as our government's policy came out two or three days short of three weeks ago, we've been clear that the policy that we've implemented is not built upon the premise of reference-based pricing. It's not therapeutic substitution; no substitution in fact would be allowed. This is something that we've been able to answer very, very clearly since we've come forward with our policy and in conversations—

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** The document speaks for itself. It talks about reference-based pricing—uses those very words—and talks about savings associated with them.

Again, we have a situation here where we have patients and taxpayers being asked to pay more—they've paid hundreds of dollars in McGuinty health taxes, just within the last few weeks in some cases—in order to receive less from your government.

Am I correct, and I ask the minister to confirm, that under the scheme you have brought forward—call it reference-based pricing, call it what you want—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, it's not.

**Mr. Tory:** Well, the document speaks for itself—the scheme you brought forward, if the two drugs are approved pursuant to the bidding process out of, say, four that bid are the ones that are approved, if a doctor prescribes either of the other two, the patients are out of

luck. It's worse than reference-based pricing because the patients will get nothing. You confirm that's true, that if a drug doesn't make your list, the patient will get nothing from the government, notwithstanding that the doctor thinks that drug is best for them. Isn't that the case on this policy?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, it's not. The honourable member can stand, I guess, quite a few times for one minute at a time, and he can attempt, in an area where his knowledge is obviously quite limited, to try and draw conclusions which are incorrect.

I offer to the honourable member again, as I did last week: If he wants to run against me, come and run against me. And to set the appropriate stage for this, recognizing the necessity of being open to voters, if the honourable member would like to debate this very specific point with me on the corner of Bloor and Jarvis, as an example, I'd be happy to do it.

1450

There's no reference-based pricing in this initiative. We came forward with our policy. It was outlined. We have a piece of legislation that backs it up. In meetings with pharmaceutical companies, pharmacists and doctors, we've been clear in saying our policy is not reference-based pricing, it's not therapeutic substitution and it does not in any way give life to the scenarios that the honourable member, through some fit of imagination, has sought to bring to the floor of this place today.

**The Speaker:** New question. The leader of the opposition.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Tory:** My question again is to the Minister of Health. Let's just pursue this again. I'm sorry that you feel you have to turn it into some kind of trivial matter involving debates at the corner of Bloor and Jarvis. The bottom line is, we're right here in the House—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

I'd just remind members that I need to be able to clearly hear the questions and responses that are put forward. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** We're having that debate right here in the House today, and so my question is this: Is it possible, then, that drugs from a given class may be prescribed by a doctor for a given patient based on the doctor's assessment of what is best for that patient or what drug works best or works at all for that patient and, under this policy, your government will not provide funding under the drug plan for the drugs prescribed by that doctor for that patient, or are you telling us that result is not possible under your law? Stand in your place and explain it. If I'm not right in what I'm saying, then please tell us what is right.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I already told the honourable member after his first question that he wasn't right in the assumption, and then he continued to charge forward indicating that he believed he was, so the strategy that he outlines might have been helpful. Accordingly, I thought



it might be appropriate to offer the opportunity for the people of Ontario, on another street corner, if you choose—we could go up to Orangeville; I'm very open to travel—to have a discussion with the honourable member on substantive points of health policy for more than a minute at a time where he plays to the cameras.

The reality is clear: I said no to the honourable member; I say no again. We recognize very fully that in some classes of drugs we have six, seven or eight, and some are going to work better or differently for some patients than for others. We believe fundamentally that we have the capacity in our province to work on a case-by-case basis in each of these classes of drugs to create the appropriate conditions under which those products can be prescribed by doctors. We have no interest in interfering in that process. We do have one interest: It's getting the best price possible for the people of Ontario so that we can spend more on better drugs for our patients.

**Mr. Tory:** Let me try again with old camera-ready Smitherman himself, talking about cameras. You just talked about a class that would have eight drugs in it. A doctor today has the latitude to prescribe—in fact, as you well know, the doctor may well try four or five different drugs to get the right one for the patient that doesn't have an adverse reaction and is effective.

You didn't answer the question, but we'll give you another chance because you should. The fact of the matter remains—and you can deny it if you want—that under your plan people could get prescribed one of those eight drugs by a doctor and your government could decide, as a result of the process in this bill, that they don't have that drug paid for by the taxpayers. That is true, and you know it. Stand up and admit it.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's simply not the case. The honourable member can spend all the time he wants trying to paint himself into a corner, but the reality is clear that there's no therapeutic substitution here, there's no reference-based pricing here. This was answered very directly at the press conference following the introduction of our policy. There's nothing he can point to in the legislation that does this.

We reserve the right, on behalf of the people of Ontario, in a circumstance where there are six, seven or eight drugs in one class on the Ontario drug formulary, to work with those providers to be able to get the very best possible price. Accordingly, we wish to be able to take whatever savings we can achieve from being recognized for the volumes we purchase and pour those resources right back into the drug program with a view to being able to create even better access for our patients to those products which are truly innovative.

This is the balance we seek to create in this bill, working with our doctors and pharmacists on behalf of patients to create better access in the Ontario drug program—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** The fact is that schemes like this, including the one brought in in British Columbia—and the minister will say it's a different name; the cabinet document

speaks for itself and calls this “reference-based pricing” or something of that order of magnitude. To quote Mr. Urquhart's column of February 26, 2005, in the BC case, “[T]he drugs didn't work or, worse, the side effects made them sicker. As a result, the savings to the government were offset by more visits to the doctor's office or to the hospital.”

You know full well that is going to be the result of your scheme to have you and your government determine what drugs people get instead of the doctors determining it by refusing to pay for some of them; that people in fact in some cases will get sicker, they won't get what the doctors asked for them to have and they will end up being in the hospital and costing more money. That's exactly what you're going to do. Just get up and have the courage to at least admit that.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It seems to me that the honourable member had a few questions too many there. The reality is, there wasn't even a question in the last part, just a minute of spewing forth a little rhetoric to try and back up a storyline that he manufactured for today and that doesn't work.

I say one more time on the floor of the Ontario Legislature, yes, no doubt whatsoever, a couple of years ago we did indicate that we were going to take a look at the policy of reference-based pricing. Accordingly, that language remains in documents that have come forward. We've brought forward our policy and we've rejected reference-based pricing. We rejected therapeutic substitution essentially because of the same challenges that the honourable member raises. But the reality is it's not in our policy, it's not in our plan, it's not in our legislation. It's not there for the patients of Ontario. We respect our patients too much. We respect our doctors too much. We respect our pharmacists too much. All we seek to be able to do is create the capacity to get the very best price for the product that we purchase so that we can expand those savings into better access to drugs for the people of the province of Ontario—something, I might add, that that party, in one year on their watch, cut.

## CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, the Premier says that you are opposed to pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care. Given that, can you explain why the McGuinty government is considering a policy where some cancer patients who have the money will be able to access very expensive cancer treatment drugs, while other patients who do not have the money will not be able to access those expensive cancer treatment drugs?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm asked to consider that as a public policy, when in a certain sense, it's just a statement of fact. It's a long-standing circumstance in the Ontario health care system that some people have had broader access to pharmaceutical product than others as a result of their own wealth or of the nature of the private drug



benefit that they have. So this circumstance is already occurring. But what we wonder is whether it is appropriate in the context of the Ontario health care system not to assist patients with pharmaceutical product, to administer that in the context of the public health care system. In other words, that in a circumstance where a patient who is quite ill seeks to use another product instead of sending them to Buffalo, as is the case right now, we might extend as far as possible the reach and the embrace of the public health care system. That is the consideration that's before us, but this situation is not one created by the policy. The circumstances are such already. We seek only—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think there's quite a difference, Minister, between someone choosing to go to Buffalo or choosing to go somewhere else, and the McGuinty government saying this is now health policy for Ontario.

You promised to fix Ontario's system of prescription drugs. You promised to ensure timely access to cancer drug treatment. The cancer advocacy centre's 2005 report card found that Ontario was the second-worst of all the provinces when it came to approving and funding cancer drugs. For example, Saskatchewan is funding nearly twice as many drugs as Ontario is in that area. Is this what you mean by fixing the problem, creating a two-tier system where those who have the money can purchase the expensive drug and have it administered in our cancer treatment centres, while those who do not have the money will do without?

1500

**Hon. George Smitherman:** A couple of points that are quite essential to the honourable member.

The first is that if he wants to pretend—I don't think there's room for pretending on this issue. The circumstances are clear, as they have been for a long time, that an individual's economics or their private benefits are making a difference in terms of their access to drug products. We can pretend it's not so, but it's so, and it has been that way for a long time. I get prescribed a \$100 inhaler. Some people in my riding don't have the capacity to benefit from that \$100 inhaler, and that's the reality that's there now.

When I saw that Saskatchewan was adopting this policy—and the member infers Saskatchewan—when I saw that the birthplace of medicare and the home of Tommy Douglas was looking at a policy to extend as far as possible the embrace of the public health care system in these circumstances, I thought it was one that we in Ontario should take a look at as well. Accordingly, that's what I asked Cancer Care Ontario and the hospitals to do, and soon they're going to bring me back a policy as an option. Our government will consider it at that time.

**Mr. Hampton:** The minister says that soon they're going to bring you back a policy. I think the policy was announced last week. The policy amounts to two-tier access to health care in Ontario.

Just to be sure, Minister, that is not the policy in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, which has approved all kinds of cancer treatment drugs that are not approved here in Ontario, has made one exception for a drug which they said is too expensive to approve—one exception for three individuals. That is not a policy.

What you seek to do is to put in place a policy that would see, on all kinds of cancer drugs, those who have the money get access in Ontario and those who do not have the money not get access in Ontario. Tell me, how is that not two-tier medicine under the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** There is no doubt whatsoever, except that we're dealing, in the grand scheme of things, with a very, very small number of people. The honourable member will know that in order to deal with the same circumstances, a clinic has emerged in Toronto that's providing those cancer drugs which government is not in a position to fund. I believe they said in their own paper that they've dealt with about 100 patients. Our province being 12 times or more greater than the population of Saskatchewan indicates that we are dealing with a small number of people. The honourable member wishes to try and say that that's not what they're doing in Saskatchewan, and then he offers me and all members of this House all the evidence that that is exactly what they're doing in Saskatchewan.

When we saw that, we thought that it was appropriate to take a look at it. I recognize—I'm honest; I'm clear about it—that there is a challenge here with respect to access, but it is a long-standing challenge. It wasn't created by the policy; the policy seeks to add the embrace of the public health care system and to extend it as far as possible, to the benefit of those patients, many of whom, of course, at that point—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Minister of Health, in Saskatchewan, the situation exists where they specifically turned down a drug, one drug. You seek to do it across many.

But I want to ask the minister today: Seniors at Riverview Manor in Peterborough are waiting for the McGuinty government's promised long-term-care revolution. Jo-Ann Hill is a former nursing aide at the home. She says that the manor is so understaffed that she and other employees were forced to cut corners to keep up, like not having the time to bathe residents when they need a bath, like not having the time to take them to the toilet, knowing they're going to soil themselves. Does the minister think that's an acceptable level of care for seniors in our province under the McGuinty government's promised long-term-care revolution?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** What I said to the honourable member, or perhaps someone else from his caucus who asked a question—I think the identical question—last week,



was that we've made an investment of 740 million additional dollars since we came to life as a government with respect to long-term care. We've gone so much further than that as well to enhance the regulations which guide care, to assist those who are working on the front lines. This has brought more than 2,300 additional personnel to work on the front lines of health care, delivering care to those in our long-term-care sector.

I think it's important that honourable members who feel, as this honourable member does, that the quality of care there is inappropriate should be taking advantage of the 1-800 action line. What I know for sure is that we have the capacity to very quickly respond to complaints that come in. I also know for sure that investments made across the breadth of long-term care have enhanced the quality there and that we have the capacity, with the resources being expended, to provide a very high standard of care to the people in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** Jo-Ann Hill, who was one of those front-line workers, paints a very different picture, a very troubling picture. She says, "What goes on behind closed doors, the community doesn't even want to know.... Because we were so rushed, we'd go in and if a resident looked fairly clean, we'd skip the washing.... That happens a lot. I've seen people just throw baby powder on them" to make them smell better.

Your government promised \$6,000 per resident of new funding for long-term care. All that has been seen three years into the McGuinty government is \$2,000 of that. As a result, long-term care workers like Jo-Ann Hill are saying the situation is getting worse, not better.

I ask you again, Minister: Why are seniors in nursing homes in Ontario under the McGuinty government going without the bath they were promised? Why are they going without things that we consider part of dignity under the McGuinty—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** First and foremost, it seems that it's limited now to a fairly select number of people in the province of Ontario who can brush away like this \$740 million. We see it as a very substantial investment in the quality of care for those in our long-term-care homes, who are amongst our most vulnerable.

Of course, money is not the only answer to circumstances. We work very hard to change the culture in our long-term-care homes, to make them more home-like. We have sought to make sure there are family resident councils that are active in each of these instances, and we've put in place a 1-800 action line which is designed to give real response to challenges and concerns that arise. Accordingly, there are 618 long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario. In addition to encouraging local honourable members to be involved in their homes, as I know they are, I would encourage anyone in the province to call the action line if they feel that the quality of care they're receiving in a long-term-care home—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** An action line is not going to fix a problem where seniors are surviving on a \$5.34-a-day

food allowance. Inmates in our jails receive at least a \$10-a-day food allowance. An action line is not going to fix the situation that Jo-Ann Hill speaks about where, despite your promises, seniors are still not getting a bath on a regular basis, where workers have to say to seniors, "I can't take you to the toilet. You'll just have to do whatever you can do." An action line is not going to fix those things. So I'm asking, when are seniors in Ontario who live in long-term-care facilities finally going to see the much-promised McGuinty government revolution in long-term care?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I simply just don't accept the honourable member's assertion. He's decided that he knows exactly what the level of care is in 618 long-term-care homes. I say, respectfully, I think he's wrong. Accordingly, what we say is that because we can't be eyes and ears in all these places at the same time, we create a capacity with fast response to circumstances that arise. This honourable member is talking about a circumstance that we don't support. Accordingly, residents there should call the 1-800 action line, and I assure them they will see action.

On this issue of food, all I say to the honourable member is that you like to trade off this issue between inmates and long-term-care residents, but when you were in government, you increased funding for food in 1993-94 for inmates but not for residents in long-term care.

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Minister of Education: Your proposed Bill 78, which is scheduled to begin public hearings this afternoon, was discussed at some length on TVO's Studio 2 this past weekend by a very learned panel. Dr. Bette Stephenson, a former Minister of Education, characterized the bill as a "total capitulation" to teachers' unions. Former NDP education minister Dave Cooke said Bill 78 gives "total power" to the teachers' unions. He said, "There needs to be a balance.... The minister and the provincial government has to protect the public interest." A former Liberal education minister, Sean Conway, agreed with both of those ministers. When asked why the Liberals are doing this, he said, "I think you might want to ask the Minister of Education."

1510

So, on behalf of those three former Ministers of Education, on behalf of the public, I'm asking you: Why are you doing this? Why are you giving the teachers' unions total power—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm very pleased to have this question today, because this is the member, at estimates committee last week, who specifically requested that the college of teachers appear at the estimates committee. Despite no appropriation line from my ministry, we very willingly provided for the college



to appear at estimates so you could ask questions directly of the college. They attended at the estimates committee, and you put many of these questions before the executive director there.

What was very interesting was that that opportunity provided this member opposite with no more fodder because all of this hullabaloo that you were trying to purport is in this bill around the college is simply not the fact. The fact is this: There is a conflict-of-interest paragraph in this bill that you refuse to acknowledge. There is also a committee for conflict that is specifically addressed in the bill that you refuse to acknowledge. I want to ask this member: Why are you so—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mr. Klees:** Interesting, Minister, because, at that estimates committee, when the current chair of that committee was asked the following question, “Do you share the view that it’s essential that the college and its council is independent and not affiliated, is not dependent, is not aligned with teachers’ federations or other groups?” the current chair in that estimates committee responded as follows: “Absolutely, and I can say that without hesitation.”

Today, two former registrars of the college, Joe Atkinson and Margaret Wilson, were reported in the *Toronto Star* as saying the following: “To change the law to give the teacher unions control of the processional body is flat-out wrong.... Put simply, Bill 78 will pass control of the Ontario College of Teachers to the teacher unions.”

Minister, both of these individuals and the current chair say that what you’re doing is wrong. Why are you doing it?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I do notice that it hasn’t taken long for this member to get back to the old days of that government bashing teachers. I will stand very proudly and say that we are in serious work, in partnership with the teaching profession, to make changes to our education system, for one good reason: the betterment of our students. That’s the difference between your government and your history and ours.

You know full well that our bill significantly addresses the concept of conflict of interest at the college. I would ask this member opposite why it is that you’re happy to see that nurses, in fact, make up 54% of their college or that social workers make up 66% of their college. What have you got against teachers? Why do you continue to bash teachers at every opportunity?

We will stand for a college that protects the public interest, and that’s what Bill 78 does.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Flora Cameron of Thunder Bay is worried her personal finances will not see her through a waiting list for a life-saving lung transplant here in Toronto. Flora was forced to travel some 1,400 kilometres to receive a lung transplant in Toronto without

any help for her accommodation as she waits here and undergoes treatment before the lung transplant can be performed.

Minister, do you agree that seniors should not have to go bankrupt while waiting for an organ transplant that will save their lives?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Of course, we are participating, through the northern health travel grant, to do our very best to support those individuals who must come to the south in search of care. We recognize that, wherever possible, we wish to offer services in the north, reflecting the vast distances that people are forced to travel.

In our province, we know that we have some serious challenges with respect to all the support that’s necessary for those who are, if I could use the word, languishing on waiting lists for organ donations. We know this is a serious challenge, and accordingly indicated here in this House earlier that we’ve got to bring together some eminent Ontarians with a view to dramatic enhancement of our capacity in this province to properly support those who are on transplant lists. I don’t have a more direct answer at this moment. It’s a complex subject that will require resources, of course. I especially want to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North, who first brought this issue to my attention.

**Mr. Hampton:** The situation hasn’t changed. Mrs. Cameron is here. She is taking part in a treatment program that is advised before undergoing a lung transplant. But she’s in a very difficult situation: Her own personal finances may run out before she can have the transplant.

It seems to me that there ought to be a strategy, an initiative, a plan to ensure that people don’t bankrupt themselves before they can actually access the surgery. We’re not talking here about tens of thousands of Ontarians; we’re not even talking about thousands of Ontarians. We’re talking about a situation where it may be hundreds in a year.

Does the McGuinty government have any plan, any initiative, anything to offer or provide to people like Mrs. Cameron, who is running out of money as we speak?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We have obviously not inherited a program—the situation, of course, is not new. We have not inherited a program with respect to those in the north as part of the inherited legacy of the Ministry of Health. We recognize very, very clearly that there are many, many hardships there for individuals who are waiting on transplant lists, and indeed for individuals who, as living donors, might be willing to offer up an organ. We have more opportunity and an obligation to do more.

I don’t have an announcement today; I’m candid about that point. I would say, in this instance, that community has been responsive to this patient’s needs by raising some support. We support those efforts very much. We thank people for them, and we want to encourage more of it. Similarly, there are important organizations in Toronto that are working to assist people with their costs. We can look at these on a case-by-case basis, but obviously that’s an interim measure. We have an obligation to come



forward with a more comprehensive policy. That work is under way. What we'll be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

### STUDENT LITERACY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Education. In my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, at Holy Family Catholic School in Wallaceburg, the staff have initiated a research project to see whether boys will develop better reading skills if they get to pick their own reading materials. This project is being funded by the boys' literacy teacher inquiry, which is an initiative of your ministry.

As parents know, boys don't necessarily make developing good reading skills a top priority for themselves. Minister, could you tell me what other initiatives you have undertaken to develop boys' literacy skills?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm very pleased to see the leadership that this member shows in education. I was happy to travel to her riding to see the commitment from education leaders and their support for this member.

On this very important initiative, we need to get boys reading just as much as girls are reading, and we've got a number of attempts to do so: recognition and motivation by engaging people like sports leaders and role models to get out there and tell boys that not only is it okay to read, but we want you to read; resources for teachers and schools, reaching out to boys in ways that will work to engage them in reading and provide them with the resources to do so. Our literacy and numeracy secretariat is doing tremendous work to coordinate those efforts among all of our schools. Finally, additional funds where some of our scoring has shown we really do have to bolster support for our boys—we've identified these schools and added \$5,000 each just for additional material that might be required.

1520

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** Thank you, Minister, for your leadership in this particular issue, and especially on the front of rural education in my riding.

But of course, boys aren't the only stakeholders in our education system, so could you tell me what your ministry is doing in terms of literacy and numeracy for all our students?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think all of us know by now that we've got some significant goals that we not only want to reach but will reach by 2008-09. To date, we now have 2,000 schools that have smaller primary class sizes, one of the most significant benefits for our young kids from JK to grade 3, and we are moving forward with that initiative. In addition, we have had 10,000 elementary teachers take additional training in instruction around literacy, writing and math. Again this summer large numbers of teachers are registering for summer programs where we will continue this very important training for

our teachers. We have 160 successful locally developed programs running across our schools, through our boards, funded by \$18 million from the Ministry of Education.

More work to do, but we are making great strides and we appreciate your support.

### ENERGY FROM WASTE

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Two of the biggest challenges that we face in Ontario today are our energy supply and the issue of dealing with waste. In an article in the *Toronto Star* by Kerry Gillespie, you're quoted as saying, "There are jurisdictions throughout the world that use energy from waste.... They have (as) rigorous environmental standards as we do, in Europe, so if they can do it, the question is: Why can't we?" says Energy Minister Donna Cansfield."

Two things: Would you first confirm that this is an accurate quote of yourself, and confirm that this is the position of the McGuinty government and the Premier regarding energy from waste? Would you confirm those two questions, Minister?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** Yes, the quote is what I said. I also said that there are new technologies around gasification in the future that might be there in the year 2015.

I think you've heard the Minister of the Environment stand up many times and say they're open to new technologies. All she asks is that they're clean and that they do not interfere with reduce, reuse, rethink and recycle.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Let me clarify, then, Minister. You're confirming that it is the position of this government that you will investigate and, if necessary, embark upon a program that generates energy from waste. Is that the position of your government? Please confirm that, Minister.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Maybe I could help a little bit, just so the member understands. We actually do produce energy from waste now. They're called landfill gas sites. But I'll go on to say that the Minister of the Environment has stated before that new technologies, as they emerge, would be looked at, and if in fact they are clean and they do not interfere with reduce, reuse, recycle, they're open to entertaining those.

### FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** A question to the Acting Premier: People across Ontario are deeply concerned about the state of FSL, French-language training, here in Ontario. This past weekend your former Minister of Education, the purported MPP for Parkdale–High Park, Gerard Kennedy, announced that he's moving himself and his family to Quebec to learn French. I say to you, people are thinking that Ontario's French-language training must be pretty abysmal in our community colleges, our universities and our schools if a sitting MPP abandons the community he represents and turns his back



on his constituents and their concerns by leaving Ontario for Quebec to learn French. What do you think?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I thought Rosario would be asking this.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** Yes, I was surprised about that as well.

After all of that, I think that our government has made it very clear that providing access to French-language services for students in our schools and for people in our community is very much a priority. We've made investments. We're certainly very proud of the commitment we've made to the French-speaking community in Ontario. We'll continue to do all that we can to work with the community to ensure that French-language instruction is available to them in their community when it's convenient.

**Mr. Kormos:** Thank you, ma'am. But the problem is that it's the former Minister of Education who appears to have lost faith in Ontario's French-language programs. Maybe he should just resign as MPP for High Park. If Mr. Kennedy is leaving his riding for Quebec to pursue personal ambitions like learning French for a federal leadership bid, maybe he should give up his MPP perks, his MPP offices, his MPP resources, his MPP staff and his \$1,600-a-week MPP salary. Acting Premier, what do you think?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question, because it does give me an opportunity to talk about the fact that our government recognizes the very unique needs of the francophone students in the province of Ontario. For that reason, we have invested \$140 million to support French-language education and students in the province. Also, we have announced a permanent task force to enhance French-language student success, which demonstrates our government's commitment to providing all students in the province with a quality education in their first language.

These developments in the area of French language are particularly significant this year as we mark the 20th anniversary of French-language services in the province of Ontario. We will continue to work with the French community, with our French-language stakeholders, to ensure that we are meeting their needs in areas that are convenient for them where they are needed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question. The member for—no props. Take that prop. Put it down.

The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa—Orléans):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Last month saw another excellent job performance for the Ontario economy. Four years ago, Ontario's unemployment rate was over 7%. In the Ottawa area, the unemployment rate four years ago averaged 7.5%. Minister,

can you please share with us how the Ontario economy performed last month?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member for the question. Indeed, the Ontario economy performed rather well last month, creating 23,800 jobs in the month of April. That brings it to a total of over 253,000 jobs created since October 2003, when this government took office. For the first four months of 2006, employment is up by 105,300 jobs, bringing the current unemployment rate to 6.2%, the lowest level in five years. Doug Porter, deputy chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns, had this to say: "Ontario's job-creation performance in the last two months has been nothing short of astounding."

The credit goes to the hard-working people of Ontario and Ontario businesses, and I would remind all members of the House that that is who we have to thank for this stellar performance of Ontario's economy.

**Mr. McNeely:** Thank you for that update, Minister. As you know, the high Canadian dollar has had an impact on manufacturers all across the country. The dollar is now at 90 cents, with some people forecasting parity with the US dollar next year. Minister, how are Ontario manufacturers responding to the high dollar, and what has our government done to assist them?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** In fact, manufacturers continue to face a challenge, but in the month of April the number of new manufacturing jobs created was 10,400. That followed the month of February, where in fact 12,500 jobs were created in manufacturing. So it's not all doom and gloom; there are some positive signs. In fact, many of the manufacturers have used the power of the high dollar to purchase equipment and indeed improve productivity. That's up by 5.2% in the year 2005.

Our government has announced recently the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, designed to assist manufacturers. In addition to that, we propose to eliminate the capital tax by 2010, if our revenues allow for that, and there's an immediate reduction, as of January 1, 2007, of 5%. This will help manufacturers get over this transitional period. But we also look to the federal government to assist Ontario manufacturers, and I challenge them to come forward with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

1530

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** A question for the minister responsible for democratic renewal. Dalton McGuinty campaigned on a promise to "let the public decide how elections work." Once in office, Dalton McGuinty has decided to break that promise by reducing the frequency of local elections without consulting the general public. To date, no minister, no member of this House, has stood in the Legislature to explain why they're making this change. Besides, it's hidden deeply among unrelated finance measures in Bill 81.



I'd say to the minister, this does not sound like you. It does not sound like the minister responsible for democratic renewal. Please tell me what consultations your ministry has done to support this change—or is it another Dalton McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** Just when I was getting happy that I was actually getting a question, this is Minister Gerretsen's question, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** First of all, I'll tell you what we're not going to do. We're not going to pass a Fewer Municipal Politicians Act, which is what that government did, in a matter of two weeks without any kind of hearing. Basically, they got rid of thousands and thousands of dedicated, hard-working, local politicians throughout this entire province without any say whatsoever. That's what we're not going to do.

What we are going to do, subject to the will of the Legislature, is give municipal councils a four-year term in exactly the same way that people at the federal and provincial levels usually have a four-year term, except in the case of a minority government. We are going to show the same kind of respect to our local politicians as people generally across this province give to provincial and federal politicians. That's what this is all about.

**Mr. Hudak:** I want to register my disappointment that the minister for democratic renewal did not answer this question. I am going to refer to her website. She has something called the "Democracy Challenge—Welcome

"The democracy challenge.

"Inform. Inspire. Engage.

"Are you interested in real, positive change for a stronger democracy? Do you have ideas on how to get young people excited and engaged in our democracy?"

Minister, I certainly do. Why don't we take schedule H out of Bill 81, have it as a stand-alone bill and consult with young people, municipal politicians and taxpayers across the province of Ontario? Minister, I'm asking for your support. As the minister for democratic renewal, will you accept my challenge in response to your democracy challenge initiative?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** As this member well knows, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which speaks on behalf of nearly every municipality of Ontario, and the city of Toronto have both passed resolutions in the past on numerous occasions to extend the term of office for locally elected politicians to exactly the same way as it is for provincial and federal politicians; namely, four years.

This is what we're doing with this act. It's something that has been endorsed by numerous—indeed, hundreds of municipalities across this province. I believe that the people of Ontario are going to be well served by it because the people who will be serving us locally will have a longer period of time to be involved in some long-range planning for their communities, which is so direly needed in order to have the quality of life that all of us seek in the communities that we live in.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I have a question to the Minister of Education. In a March 2005 article by Louise Brown in the *Toronto Star*, former Education Minister Gerard Kennedy said he would provide special funding for classes in black cultural heritage that can, in his words, "make a big difference to students' sense of identity." However, the provincial government provides absolutely no funding for these programs.

We have today representatives from the coalition for black culture, the association for black education and the association of parents for black students. When can they expect the funding to arrive?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** Let me take an opportunity, on behalf of all members of the House, to welcome our guests into the Legislature. We know the important role that you play in our school system and we welcome you here.

I'm also aware that, I think the middle of last week, I received a request for a meeting with, I believe perhaps, most of the individuals who are here today. I hope that we're going to be able to have that meeting very soon and I appreciate that request for a sit-down discussion.

On the matter at hand, I do believe that these individuals, who have known the school system perhaps longer than I have as a new minister elected a month ago now—what is very important for us is that as part of our pledge, not only through the election platform but now as we're moving forward as government, is the institution of a curriculum council specifically to address what should be addressed in our curriculum. This is a significant part of that conversation. In addition, I believe that these groups have things that they would like to address with me and I will be in a position to hear them.

**Mr. Marchese:** We all know that Kennedy is gone and we also know there was no response from the former minister. There has been, evidently, no response from the bureaucrats. I'm happy to hear the minister is going to arrange for a meeting. That's good.

As a result of Kennedy's promises, the Toronto District School Board opened more black cultural heritage classes. At a time when programs for young black youth are essential for developing their self-knowledge, creative development and self-esteem, do you intend to keep Kennedy's promise as quickly as possible and fund these programs?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The member opposite is very aware, as we have spent so much time together through the estimates committee and I have continued to reiterate, that all of the school boards, 72 school boards across Ontario, are now waiting for grants, the grants for student needs that are due out within these next 30 days. That is more than \$17 billion of an over-\$18-billion ministry that is going to school boards for a whole variety of programming. I will tell you that in these next 30 days, the Toronto school board, which is actively involved with



the individuals who are here in the House, will be receiving significant information about their funding. I hope that everyone can wait about 30 days.

### TOURISM

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism. Minister, as the weather changes and becomes warmer, the constituents of my riding are getting ready to enjoy the spring and summer months. We're anxiously awaiting the warmth and to welcome our many guests that we will be receiving in the riding of Huron-Bruce. Most people have begun planning now for their summer vacations, and in my riding of Huron-Bruce, we have many exciting events planned throughout the spring and summer months. I want to give you just a few examples: We have the Kincardine Scottish Festival, the Zurich Bean Festival, the Huron County Playhouse, the Blyth Festival. We have Pumpkinfest in Port Elgin. We have the most beautiful sunsets in the riding of Huron-Bruce. Why, you can see the sun set twice in two spots in my riding. Goderich, take the opportunity—it is the prettiest town in Canada. Bayfield, Southampton, but—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Minister of Tourism?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I've been waiting for a question such as this. Ontario is a province full of attractions, festivals and cultural events. In the coming months, there are great things happening throughout the province that are sure to attract thousands of visitors. In the next few weeks theatres across Ontario, including the Stratford and Shaw festivals, will be opening their doors for their summer seasons. Visitors will have a wide variety of performances to choose from from across the province, from Drayton to Morrisburg, Port Dover to North Bay.

As well, festivals small and large are happening all over the province. This week visitors can head up to Ottawa to take in the blooms of the Canadian Tulip Festival, which is on from May 4 to 22, or sample culture and food from around the globe at the 38th annual Niagara Folk Arts Festival, happening May 12 to 18. Virtually every town has something. Go to [www.ontariotravel.net](http://www.ontariotravel.net) for further details.

1540

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Thank you, Minister. I can tell you that it does seem like Ontario is the place to be in the coming months, not only the riding of Huron-Bruce but all of Ontario.

I see that Ontario has recently launched a new cultural tourism marketing campaign that has reached over 55 million people in Ontario, Quebec and the United States. That highlights the cultural renaissance that is happening right across Ontario.

According to Statistics Canada, 75% of Ontario's tourists are from within Ontario's borders, and many of those people are looking for new and exciting travel

experiences close to home. Yes, there are many things that we can come and look at, but let me just talk about Huron-Bruce—our sunsets.

Minister, what is our government doing to attract Ontarian tourists, as well as visitors from outside our province—

**The Speaker:** The question's been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Jim Bradley:** I want to tell you and all members of the House that our government is investing in tourism in Ontario. In addition to the funding that our government provides for festivals and events across the entire province, our agencies are attracting tourists through their regular seasonal events and their special events.

This summer, Ontario Place will host the Rogers Chinese Lantern Festival. This exclusive North American premier of never-before-seen traditional Chinese lanterns will light up Toronto skies for 65 nights this summer. The festival will bring to life an authentic Chinese marketplace, cultural performances and thousands of traditional art and red silk lanterns. Our government has committed \$500,000 towards bringing this once-in-a-lifetime festival to Ontario.

Another example: Fort William Historical Park in Thunder Bay will host, for a second year in a row, Rock the Fort from June 16 to 18. There are many other things happening. All of our agencies have exciting and interesting programs and events to attract visitors from Ontario, Canada and from beyond this summer.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, the only information that we've received so far with respect to the funding for your proposed new human rights system is a vague answer that you gave to the media concerning \$1 million-plus being committed to this project. In your legislation, you've also proposed the establishment of two new bodies: the Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Disabilities Rights Secretariat. You also announced a legal support centre, which was markedly absent from the legislation. Can you be clear with us about how you intend to fund three new bodies when the justice sector budget is flatlined until at least 2008-09? Clearly, \$1 million isn't going to cut it. Can you please tell us where is the plus, how much is it and how's it going to happen?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** Let me start by saying that there's no question that providing public legal support through the human rights legal support office is a critical component of the human rights reforms that we have brought forward to this Legislature, the debate of which will begin today. There's no question that as we propose movement to a direct-access system which, in the words of the NDP task force chair, Mary Cornish, is a consumer-oriented—one might say victim-oriented—system, we need to ensure that we have the supports there for them—absolutely, no question, full stop. This is something that needs to be entrenched by way of legislation. We certainly look forward to getting



that recommendation from the official opposition. This is a debate. We are looking for recommendations. We anticipate that this should go to committee as soon as—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mrs. Elliott:** There are currently 2,400 human rights complaints under review in Ontario. If your bill is passed in its current form, this would subject all of these Ontarians to the new legislation, many of whom are under the impression that they would continue to be able to get legal aid certificates to continue with their complaints. Since your legislation gives us no indication of where the funding is going to come from, can you please tell these 2,400 people what you plan to do with them now that there's no guarantee that their complaints will be dealt with without paying their own way?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** This is the very problem. The official opposition asks about the state of legal representation right now. There is basically no legal representation whatsoever provided to a complainant who goes before the Human Rights Commission or the Human Rights Tribunal—zero. There are very, very, very few legal aid certificates that are provided. Right now, the way the system works is, the Human Rights Commission takes over a complaint and then it takes about five years to get a resolution.

But if the member is asking about budgets and funding, I'm sure she'll want to acquaint herself with her government's record when they were in power. Between 1995 and 2003 we saw cuts after cuts after cuts after cuts. The contribution made by the very party that brought in the Human Rights Code in 1962—for the past 15 years, the party and that government has turned its back on the human rights system. I welcome the newfound interest in it, and I look forward to this debate.

## PETITIONS

### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have here a petition that was sent to me by Carol Harrison. It's regarding speech and voice therapy. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise

disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services,

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

It's signed by a great number of my constituents in and around Oxford county. I affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I do keep getting petitions from the Consumer Federation of Canada. The petition reads as follows. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and specifically to the Minister of Government Services.

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information, such as SIN and loan account numbers.

"(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

"(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

"(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate."

Since I agree, I am delighted to sign this petition.

### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I want to thank Laurett Tulipano, who's a speech language pathologist from my riding, for sending me the following petition.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and



"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech language pathologists to provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

1550

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services;

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

I agree with the petition and have signed it.

#### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I would like to acknowledge the Cimicata family on Carmel Crescent in Mississauga for this petition. It's addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

"Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

"Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services."

This is an excellent petition. I agree with it completely. I'm pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Patrick to carry it for me.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of Michael Orr and many others. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

"Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

"Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

"Whereas Ontario is the only western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

"Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

"Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

"Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

"We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded."

I'm pleased to present this on their behalf, and present it to Gemma.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I have a petition here from Résidence Champlain de l'Orignal and the Sarsfield Colonial Home.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents



need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** This is a petition on macular degeneration. Dr. Tim Hillson from Orillia helped me with this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common 'dry' type and the 'wet' type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

"Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

"Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service."

I'm pleased to sign this petition and present it to Elliott to present to the desk.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I do again receive petitions about the Portuguese home. I'm delighted to read this petition to you. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Portuguese Canadians number 171,545 in the Toronto census metropolitan area, many of whom encounter serious barriers (language, culture and location) to accessing community and long-term-care services; and

"There are no long-term-care homes dedicated to the needs of Portuguese Canadian seniors; and

"Camões House for the Aged and Portuguese Community Centre of Toronto is proposing a partnership with a local long-term-care provider to purchase up to 160 existing beds in the Toronto area (for a nominal fee) to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto. This partnership is tentative and is dependent on the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, his staff, and members of the Legislature to support the Camões proposal and to make the appropriate administrative and policy changes required to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto."

Since I agree with this petition 100%, I'm delighted to sign it.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I have another petition on macular degeneration.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common 'dry' type and the 'wet' type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

"Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

"Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many



patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service."

I'm pleased to sign this and present it to Gennaro for presentation to the table.

1600

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to revert to motions for the purpose of moving a motion respecting the standing committee on social policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Bradley seeks unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent? Sorry, I thought I heard a no, but I thought I heard it come from back here. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that the standing committee on social policy be authorized to meet until 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9, 2006, for the purpose of conducting public hearings on Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved that the standing committee on social policy be authorized to meet until 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9, 2006, for the purpose of conducting public hearings on Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Mr. Bryant moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code /  
Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la  
personne.

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I am very pleased to kick off second reading debate on this bill. I don't think I can do any better than to refer to the words of a former chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, a professor at Ryerson University, Catherine Frazee, in a letter of April 5, 2006, that she wrote to, in her words, her "colleagues in the social justice movement."

"Nearly 15 years ago the people of Ontario spoke about the pressing need for human rights reform....

"Was anyone listening?" she asked.

"Until now, it would seem that no one else was listening. Until February of this year," when the government announced its intended changes, the result of which is Bill 107 that's before us today.

"Reasonable people will disagree about the precise shape that change should take." She goes on to say, "The issue of the moment is not the question of whose views will prevail on the nuts and bolts questions of human rights reform—crucial though these questions may be. What matters at this moment is that we seem to have the attention of the government of the day," she writes, "an on-the-record commitment and a timetable for reform this spring. I urge my colleagues in the social justice movement, for whom I have nothing but the greatest of affection and respect, not to squander this opportunity," she writes.

Just one more sentence. She said: "But please, let's not demand another public consultation that can become one more excuse for government inaction. We can have full, open and accessible public hearings on the basis of tabled legislation.... But let's remember that every day of talk takes us one day further away from the moment of political resolve, one day further away from reforms now at least 15 years overdue, and still counting."

Again, that's from Catherine Frazee, a former chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, who is a leader in her field.

It is helpful because it very much frames the debate in which we're in. There is, I would argue, a note of anguish and concern in her letter, and the anguish is simply this: For many, many years, there has been talk within social justice circles and the human rights community of the need for updating and modernizing our human rights system. I think it would surprise most Ontarians to learn that our human rights system has never been changed since it was introduced in 1962. The concern I think being expressed quite explicitly by Catherine Frazee and by many others is that here is our opportunity to undertake those necessary changes, and there is a great concern, as opined by Ms. Frazee, of the possibility of the opportunity being squandered.

So this debate is a very, very, very important debate, but this legislative debate is the beginning of a very positive opportunity. Remember, Ms. Frazee wrote her letter before the bill was introduced. I would imagine that she is very supportive of the fact that there is a bill before us for us to debate. I would submit that the direct-access-plus-public-support system that is put forward by this



government, and that this bill ought to receive the support of this House at second reading—of course, second reading being support, or not, in principle for the bill—and that the very, very important questions about, as she puts it, the nuts and bolts of human rights reforms—very important questions—have to be addressed and will be addressed, and quite specifically will be addressed in the province-wide public hearings that will begin once we are able to get this bill to committee for those province-wide public hearings, but that we be clear on what we're debating here. I take up the submission and question and plea from Ms. Frazee and suggest that the debate is about whether or not we should reform a 40-year-plus-old system, recognizing the changes to the human rights system that have come and adopting a direct-access-plus-public-support model.

There are those who disagree with that model, and I understand that. I don't agree with them, but I understand that. But let's not mix up the debate over the nuts and bolts of this model with the debate over direct access, because I say to you that the direct-access-plus-public-support model enshrined in this bill is better for Ontario human rights, full stop. The debate about the nuts-and-bolts implementation of this is an important debate, but we ought not to squander the first opportunity in the name of the second question.

**1610**

I guess the first thing I should do is say: Why would we change the system—simply because it's 40 years old plus? Is that good enough reason to change it? Well, let me give you this picture. The Human Rights Commission takes in about 2,500 cases per year. The commission refers to the tribunal, on average, 50 to 100 cases per year. At most, 6% of the complaints that come forward find their way to the tribunal. The average length of time for a case to be referred to the tribunal is three to four years, and then it takes approximately a year for the tribunal to do its work. That's an average of five years for a matter to be resolved.

The great concern is—and the Speaker knows this, and many members in this House know this as well—that if, as MPPs, we have a constituent come in and tell us about something that happened to that constituent, that their employer or prospective employer said or did, that a landlord might have said or done, that government might have said or done, we have to tell them, “The MPP has a role to play here, but really you need to take your complaint to the Human Rights Commission.” Our heart sinks a little bit because we know that there will be no justice for that complainant for about five years. Years pass, witnesses go elsewhere, evidence goes elsewhere; sometimes complainants go elsewhere. Five years is truly justice chronically delayed and justice denied.

How did this happen? The 1962 system imagined a certain number of complaints coming forward to the commission. The kind of complaints that came to the commission were, in many cases, different from the kind of complaints that come to the commission today. Remember, in 1962, Robarts is Premier, Bill Davis is a

backbench MPP and the leader of the official opposition is a very young man and the leader of the third party is a very young man. They're both about eight and 10 respectively. Of course, there's no Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The model that was put forward by Premier Robarts was that most complainants coming forward to the commission are not going to be versed in their human rights, are not going to be able to—the argument goes—direct a complaint in a particular direction, and because of the state of civil rights in Ontario at that time—and there was no human rights commission in existence in the country—the commission will take over the complaint.

Many of these complaints were very straightforward. Most of them involved explicit discrimination—not systemic discrimination; explicit discrimination. Over time, the commission, which initially had been charged with two functions, (1) dealing with complaints and (2) promoting human rights, became completely and utterly overtaken by the first mandate, and that is dealing with complaints. Eighty-seven per cent of the commission's budget is spent on processing, mediating, litigating and witness statement taking around complaints—87% of the budget.

So the ability of the commission to undertake preventive efforts to promote human rights, which was the second part of its mandate, has been extremely marginalized. Notwithstanding that, the commission has done a remarkable job. The mandatory retirement bill that came before and passed this Legislature: Arguably the impetus for that was a Human Rights Commission report. The Human Rights Commission has come forward, time and time again, with reports that have led to government change of all party stripes, but the commission's ability to deal with those matters that don't come before the Human Rights Commission by way of complaint is seriously curtailed when in fact such a small part of its budget ends up being spent on matters of prevention, government policy and systemic investigation.

So the system right now is broken. I don't just say it; Mary Cornish, in her report, which I will get into in a moment, has said it; the Honourable Gérard La Forest, former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada has said that of this commission and other commissions that include these kinds of delays. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has, time after time after time, castigated provincial and federal governments for not making amendments and putting forth reform necessary in order to provide for direct access. Many, many people—I just cited Catherine Frazee, and others who I'll cite in a moment—have said we need to make those changes, we need a direct access system, because the current system isn't working.

The statistics, as I say, speak for themselves. I should say also that a discussion paper was released quite helpfully by Ms. Cornish. It was prepared by Fay Faraday and Mary Cornish. It's called Ontario Introduces Legislation to Reform Human Rights System. It is quite extensive. It responds to this bill and it asks a lot of very



tough questions that I think we're going to be debating today, hearing from people on and trying to remedy during the committee stage of debate of this bill. Ms. Cornish chaired a task force that was commissioned by the NDP government. The report came out in 1992. Basically, silence was the response to that report by that government then and by the subsequent government. That report and its recommendation is in many ways the inspiration for the reforms here today.

One of the concerns expressed by Ms. Cornish is that the commission is not consumer-oriented. Of course, it acts in the public interest, and the men and women who work in the commission are utterly devoted to a human rights system and utterly devoted to improving the human rights system. There's no question about that. They're working within a 40-year-old-plus human rights construct. In this discussion paper, Ms. Cornish points out that, "The commission's role is to act as an impartial third party representing the public interest. It does not act on behalf of the complainant. The commission does not provide legal representation for either complainants or respondents." So if people are imagining that we're moving from a system where they get legal representation to a system where they're not, they're just flat out wrong. They're just mistaken. In fact, there is only legal representation right now for those who can afford it and for a very small number of people who are able to obtain legal aid certificates. The vast majority of people who bring forward a complaint get no legal representation and we are replacing it—and this is the point—we are seeking to replace it with a system where they do get legal representation, where you don't have a matter taken over by the commission and thereafter become a bystander, but you in fact are provided with legal representation and then you direct the complaint, as with every other complaint that comes before our justice system in the administrative law world.

There are other statutory straitjackets that the commission currently exists in, but there are also some myths about exactly how the commission works. One of them is that everybody gets legal representation. In fact, nobody gets public legal representation. She goes on in her discussion paper to say, "The commission is not required to deal with all complaints on their merits. The commission can, without a hearing, decide that a complaint will not proceed." This "without a hearing" is the whole point, arguably, of direct access—direct access to the human rights tribunal, which is being proposed in this bill, where you don't go to the commission, wait four years, be one of the 6% of cases that goes before the tribunal and then wait another year to get the results. Instead, you get your day in court. For many, many people, that day in court, that due process is very much part of the justice that they are seeking. Yes, they are seeking a remedy, but they also want to be heard and they want to get their day in court, not five years down the line. That's why we say we're shortening the pipeline for complainants between complaint and hearing and response. We do it in the name of giving that direct access, not only to massively

reduce delays in the system and get rid of the duplication in the system at every part, but also to give people that hearing that 94% of Ontarians who go before the human rights system don't get.

1620

The vast majority of people who go to the commission don't get that day in court. So what happens? You go to the commission, witness statements are taken and you become a witness in the proceeding. Again, as Ms. Cornish says in her discussion paper, "Because relatively few claims are referred to a hearing before the tribunal, human rights enforcements happen out of the public eye through the mediation-conciliation-dismissal process. This lessens the systemic impact at rectifying discrimination."

There are two changes here that address the issue of systemic discrimination. If all the complaints that come before the tribunal are at least given the opportunity for a hearing—some people may decide they don't want to have a hearing, and some people may decide they want it to be mediated—you're not going to have 94% of complainants not getting a hearing. That means that all those complaints that come before the Human Rights Commission right now and are resolved behind closed doors result in either no written decision at all from the Human Rights Commission—again, it's not their fault; that's the way the statute and regulations work—or a boilerplate decision is offered.

Because it happens behind closed doors and you don't get a full decision at the end, it is very unfortunate but also a reality that some businesses—not all, but some—see human rights complaints to the commission as just a cost of doing business. Why? Because they're not going to be before a tribunal with the media sitting in the gallery, watching their behaviour; they're not going to have their practices considered in an open tribunal by the Human Rights Commission. It's going to be done through a number of witness statement-taking exercises that happen behind closed doors.

So first, you're going to have transparency in a system, which means that if someone brings a complaint against a respondent and you choose to defend yourself, you're going to have to defend yourself in public. That will help address systemic issues.

But more importantly, what about everybody else who doesn't go to the commission? We hear that 2,500 cases come to the commission every year. We hear that about 6%, at most, get a hearing from the tribunal. What about the thousands, maybe millions, of Ontarians who don't go to the commission? What about them? Who's going out there to determine whether there's systemic discrimination affecting their workplace or their situation at the hands of government, of business or of housing? Who's doing that right now? The Human Rights Commission has a very hard time doing that right now, when about 13% of their budget is devoted to that, and much of that gets taken up by government policy analysis and their annual report.

Imagine a Human Rights Commission that can go out and find the glass ceilings that aren't coming to our



human rights system; imagine a Human Rights Commission that can reach out and remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities who don't go to our human rights system; imagine a Human Rights Commission that can take on sometimes very politically sensitive issues and pursue them with a rigour of investigation and report, which right now we haven't even contemplated. What about all that discrimination which currently goes entirely and completely unchecked by our human rights system? Under this proposal, the commission will focus its task on just that. It will focus on prevention, public education and policy analysis. It will be able to focus on the systemic, and it will have the stick that it needs.

I don't mind telling anybody who cares to ask that our chief commissioner, Barbara Hall, had very strong feelings about the ability of the commission to have the power to bring someone, or a business or government, to the tribunal, so that as she and the commission go forth and root out discrimination and alert businesses to their non-compliance with statutes, for example, they can't just brush it off and say, "Oh, whatever. I'll just have to deal with the publicity." They're going to know that if the commission isn't satisfied, they'll have to answer for the allegations of systemic discrimination before the Human Rights Tribunal, and the commission will be able to intervene on those complaints before the tribunal where the commission says, "Yes, that actually is an example of systemic discrimination that we're either working on now or have worked on or ought to be working on."

Those are very important tools of the commission. It is a sword that the commission can use to ensure compliance, but it is also a shield against those who suggest that the commission become solely a reporting body. It's not just reporting, not just analysis, not just public education, not just investigation that the commission would do under this new model. It's also a sword, a very powerful sword, a very powerful tool that it will be able to exercise before the Human Rights Tribunal.

Some of the tough questions that have been asked by Mary Cornish and others include, "You need to define that better in the legislation, in this bill that you have before you." That is exactly what we need to address in committee. But again, let us not mistake the debate over the clarification and nuts and bolts of the new model that's being presented for a rejection of the model in this legislation that is before this House.

Ms. Cornish, as I say—again, the report is authored by Fay Faraday and Mary Cornish—in her discussion paper asks a lot of very good questions. But she begins with this: "The current Ontario government ... have committed themselves to achieving a truly accessible and effective system and they should be commended for that." You don't have to commend me, Speaker; that's okay. "While Bill 107 is a major start in that direction"—she then goes on to ask the tough questions, but Bill 107 is "a major start in that direction," and Bill 107 seeks to bring in this direct access model that many have been asking for for a very long time.

Who else is asking for the direct access model? John Fraser, the executive director of the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, writes on May 4, "The present human rights system does not work for our clients in any way. The move to a model where all complaints can proceed to the Human Rights Tribunal with publicly funded legal supports, and where the commission can focus on what it does best—public education, research, advocacy and public interest complaints—is a huge step forward. In our view, Bill 107 could produce one of the most advanced and progressive human rights systems in the world."

Ruth Carey, executive director of the HIV and AIDS Legal Clinic: "I applaud the government's legislation to reform the human rights system. Human rights and community groups have asked for this for many years. We welcome this government's commitment to human rights."

Joel Richler, chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress, writes that the Canadian Jewish Congress "applauds the government for the proposed creation of an anti-racism secretariat and a disability rights secretariat within the commission. We look forward to working with the Ontario government on the key details in this new legislation and subsequent regulations, ensuring continued access to a practical remedy in human rights cases for everyone in this province."

Kathy Laird, director of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, writes that these reforms are "long overdue."

Mary O'Donoghue, constitutional, civil liberties and human rights chair of the Ontario Bar Association, writes in a press release in February of this year, "The changes proposed are timely and well designed to solve current system problems.... Ontario will reap long-term benefits from these changes. We applaud the plan to permit direct access for complainants to the Human Rights Tribunal, as we believe that this will greatly enhance access to justice for those who believe that their human rights have not been respected."

**1630**

A Toronto Star editorial said, "The long overdue reforms are welcome."

Raj Anand, former chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, has also been arguing for a direct-access system and is supportive of the model.

Again, the debate is about which model to embrace. The current one with its inherent delays and its approach to human rights complaints that does not reflect the modern reality of discrimination in Ontario to the extent that it does not permit for systemic discrimination hearings before the tribunal in a meaningful way—right now the system responds. It responds to complaints that are brought forward to it—2,500-plus complaints are brought to it. But it doesn't reach out and say, "Here's an area of systemic discrimination that we need to highlight. We need to either embarrass government or embarrass this business or this industry," and then, if they won't comply "We'll take you to the Human Rights Tribunal with new,



more powerful remedies contained in this legislation and we will root out that injustice." Right now, it is purely an ad hoc response to complaints brought forward to the system.

So I argue that in fact the direct-access model with public supports, an invigorated Human Rights Commission with an arguably new focus—but in many ways a return to a focus on the promotion of human rights—along with the entrenching through this bill of the long-standing and critical commitment of the Human Rights Commission to issues affecting Ontarians with disabilities and Ontarians who are victims of racial discrimination by establishing an anti-racism secretariat and by establishing a secretariat devoted to Ontarians with disabilities—just so we're clear, there's an accessibility secretariat established in a different ministry, but that is a secretariat intended to ensure compliance with legislation affecting Ontarians with disabilities. It is there for the long term to ensure compliance. It doesn't deal with those matters that amount to violations of the Human Rights Code, and it doesn't deal with matters affecting systemic discrimination.

I know that at least one member of the Ontarians with disabilities committee has argued that we ought to put off debate over human rights reforms until 2025. That's the date on which the accessibility legislation is to be implemented in its entirety. I disagree. I do not think that we should wait another 20 years to debate and have the opportunity to make changes to a system for which changes have been asked for 15 years and which has seen no change in some 40 years.

The purpose of a direct-access system, I have said before, is partly to address the delays and the inability of the commission to deal with systemic issues, but it is also partly to provide access to those, give that due process and give timely justice to those who appear before the Human Rights Tribunal.

I've cited a number of people in support of this model, but I want to pause with respect to some of those endorsements and respond to a particularly invidious line of inquiry that has been brought by both of the opposition parties in trying to label some of the people who support this model as somehow acting in their on self-interest. Those who support this have been dismissed as lawyers by the leader of the official opposition and by the justice critic in the third party. Certainly, the former chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Catherine Frazee, doesn't happen to share the profession that is being castigated here.

But I want to say something about the people who work in the human rights system. Believe you me, if they wanted to act in their self-interest, they would be in a different area of law. They would be practising something else; they would not be in the area of human rights. People who work in the human rights field, who have devoted their careers, their talents and their energies to that area, do so out of a spirit of social justice and for assistance, trail-blazing, championing in many cases the underdog, people who are victims of human rights dis-

crimination. I think it would be helpful in the debate going forward if that really invidious line of argument did not play the prominent role it has played thus far, because it does not, firstly, in any way characterize the people who have lent their name and support to this social justice reform.

It also, of course, provides a clever distraction from the real debate, which is: Is this direct-access-plus-legal-support model in the public interest, and is it going to serve those Ontarians better? I have said before, again and again, and I'll say again: The men and women who work at the Human Rights Tribunal and who work at the Human Rights Commission and who work in the human rights community, either as part of their profession or not, are devoted to human rights. But we're not doing these reforms for them, and this human rights system is not in place for them. It is supposed to be here for the victims of discrimination. These human rights reforms are brought in the name of victims unheard, or unheard for many years. We ought not to get distracted, I think, by those nuts-and-bolts questions that deal with the actual people working in the system when all of those people, in my respectful submission, are totally dedicated to human rights in the province of Ontario.

There has also been an effort by some to suggest that we're going down the path of British Columbia in their human rights reforms. They provided direct access all right, but they didn't provide any legal supports, and they got rid of the Human Rights Commission. They eliminated it. They didn't embolden it, as this does; they didn't expand it; they got rid of it. But the suggestion that Ontario is pursuing the BC model is entirely misconstrued.

It was quite helpful, I thought, in a discussion paper by Mary Cornish which is not uncritical, that she refers to whether or not Bill 107 adopts the British Columbia model. She says, "The model that has been introduced in Bill 107 is not similar to the British Columbia model, which has been strongly criticized by human rights advocates." So rather than, again, imagine that we're doing something that we're not, let's focus on the direct-access model and ask those important questions about the nuts and bolts.

The opportunity to make these changes obviously does not come along very often. The NDP government established a task force: the Cornish report. The recommendations were entirely ignored. The previous government chose not to embark on any human rights reform that I am aware of at any time in the eight years in which they were in office. The budgetary decisions made by the previous two governments also speak for themselves.

But this is an opportunity, which does not come along very often, to have that debate about a new model and a new system—a new system that will see access to justice for Ontarians where now there is none; a new model that will seek to remove the duplication that takes place and increase the transparency in not only what happens when the decision comes out but what happens during the hearing itself.



1640

It's also an opportunity, in some ways, to return the commission to its roots and its focus on promoting the human rights of Ontarians while, at the same time, recognizing that, since 1962, when boards of inquiry had to be set up after the Human Rights Code and the commission were established to deal with those complaints that could not be resolved by way of mediation, eventually resulting in the Human Rights Tribunal—that that progression, as society changed, as the complaints changed and as the nature of discrimination changed, has led to the need for these reforms. Many, many people have been calling for these reforms for many years.

I look forward to hearing dissent on the subject of a direct-access model. Obviously some people disagree. I've been told by a very respected member of the human rights community—he said to me point-blank, “I'm fundamentally opposed to a direct-access model.” Well, this is a debate about the direct-access model. I say to you that those who work in this field—past human rights commissioners have called for this very proposal. A task force brought together people in the sequel to the task force, a very extensive discussion paper by the same author. People who work in the system every day are calling for it, but we can agree to disagree on that and then also move forward to a debate—an important one, with important questions asked about the nuts and bolts as to how this system works.

I started with a lament from Ms. Frazee with respect to her concern about more public consultations. Granted, as I understand it from this letter, she is supportive of the province-wide public hearings that will be launched as soon as this bill completes debate at second reading and can go to the committee stage. She said, “[L]et's not demand another public consultation that can become one more excuse for government inaction. We can have full, open and accessible public hearings on the basis of tabled legislation.”

To those who say that the consultation has been inadequate, I think it is quite appropriately and entirely addressed in Ms. Cornish's discussion paper where she outlines multiple meetings that the ministry had with people. I understand that the opposition sometimes, when they disagree with a bill—and I know because I was in opposition and I remember this. Sometimes you disagree with a bill. But instead of saying, “No, no, I'm against direct access; no, no, I don't want that,” and instead of saying, “No, the status quo works well,” you say, “We need more public consultation.” I know we'll hear that.

I just want to say, though, that there is a time where something has to come here, and we have an opportunity, as MPPs representative of our communities, to debate issues. If we'd had more and more public consultations, public hearings, task forces and studies, which we've had before, to precede the introduction of this bill, I say to you: This bill would never have hit the Legislature and the debate would go on and on.

We haven't had a case where a previous government introduced a bill of this type at least in the last 15 years

where we actually did have an opportunity to debate it. So I say, of course the charge will be levelled by the opposition that there hasn't been enough consultation on this. I say that there have been decades of consultation on this. But in any event, all right, fine; now we get an opportunity to have a debate.

I look over and I see one of the deans of the Legislature, who is a big believer of having important debates in the Legislature and not outside of the Legislature, and I agree with him on that. The committee hearings will be critically important where these very specific questions that are being asked now will need to be answered by the time the committee hearing stage is complete and we have an opportunity, if we get there, to go to clause-by-clause amendments without presuming to imagine that the Legislature will go there, although I hope it does.

In the words of Ms. Frazee, let's remember that every day this continues, while these are important days of debate, we need to come to a decision point on this. We need to say, “Yes, that system is broken and we need a new one, and this one looks like it's going to address the major flaws of the current system.”

In 1962: Robarts, Premier; Bill Davis, backbencher. None of us in this House was in the Legislature, which means that from Mr. Sterling and Mr. Bradley right through to the class of 2003, we have spent our entire political lives hearing about problems with the human rights system. I say to this House that now is our opportunity to fix it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** This bill, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act, is the kind of legislation that should not, in my view, involve heavy partisan debate. It's the kind of legislation where it's very difficult for any government to reach proper balance when dealing with justice issues.

I had very early experience in my parliamentary career, as a parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General in 1977-78—a long time ago—to deal with many new reforms in law that were brought forward during a minority Parliament at that time. The debate and the committee hearings were extremely good, because there was a constructive atmosphere in the committee room and in the Legislature. One of the great things about a minority Parliament is that the opposition has to take a responsible position because, in the final analysis, they hold the votes in the House and they hold the votes in the committee.

My druthers on this kind of legislation when there's a majority government would be for the Attorney General to have sent this bill out after first reading. As you may remember, when I was the House leader, we changed the standing orders to allow a minister to do that. The advantage of doing that, for government purposes, is for the government to come to the Legislature, to come to the committee of the Legislature, and say, “Anything can be changed in this bill if good arguments are put up.” The problem with carrying this bill forward after second



reading is that people start to entrench themselves in particular positions that may or may not sustain themselves after they hear committee representations.

I look forward to a constructive debate on this and to constructive committee hearings. Let's hope we improve the Ontario Human Rights Code as a result of that process.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I want to make it very, very clear that New Democrats are adamantly—adamantly—opposed to the proposition being put forward by the Attorney General and the Dalton McGuinty Liberals today. The complete dismantling of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, with its skilled, trained staff and the service it has provided over the course of decades, is a thoroughly objectionable exercise by this Attorney General and this government at this point in time when the role of that commission has never been more important, in view of the incredible diversity of our society and the regrettable failure of us as a provincial community to reject racism and abolish racism, to reject discrimination and abolish discrimination.

This is the privatization, the Americanization, of human rights advocacy here in the province of Ontario, and New Democrats want no part of it. To talk about a right under the Ontario Human Rights Code when the person seeking justice, the person seeking redress, has to retain private counsel is a mockery. It's a right when, in fact, there will be no right, and there certainly won't be righting of any wrongs. For the Attorney General to say, "Oh, well, the commission doesn't provide lawyers," is to suggest that the victims, by virtue of the crown attorney prosecuting their case—of course it's not their personal lawyer, but it's their advocate in a litigious process. New Democrats look forward to this debate and to committee hearings.

1650

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** I've spent the last hour or so, or something just less than that, listening to the Attorney General very carefully in his opening comments.

I was particularly struck by a couple of things. One is the whole issue of how long it's been—legislation around human rights has been in place more than 40 years and, as I understood it, it's some 15 years since there's been a variety of consultations, papers, white papers and others trying to move the agenda forward. In each of those instances, government failed, for whatever reasons, to act on a series of recommendations that came forward. I want to commend the Attorney General and the government for bringing legislation forward that clearly sets out and articulates a strategy of direct access so those with complaints will be able to have those complaints heard, certainly in a more timely fashion than is the current situation.

I listened carefully to his comments about how people want to have access to justice. Often it's not the outcomes at the end, but the opportunity to have that access to a system in a very public way that's important to the complainant, to ensure that those views are heard

even if, at the end of the day, their desires are not met. So I want to commend him for bringing this forward at this point in time, desiring to see this move through second reading debate so that it can move into the public realm yet again, in a more formal fashion, and his desire, as is the desire of those in the social justice community, to see this matter dealt with through legislation and, if successful, have the yardsticks move forward; at the very least, to have the yardstick move to today after some 40-plus years.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** There are three points that I would like to make concerning the Attorney General's comments this afternoon.

The first one is, I certainly agree with him that there's no question that with any legislation that's been outstanding for 40 years and hasn't been reviewed and modernized to reflect the needs of our modern and diverse community, that certainly needs to happen, and the sooner, the better.

Secondly, it's also clear and there's no question that there are many groups that have been involved leading up to the passage of this legislation. There has been some consultation, but there are many people who are involved and have been deeply involved with passing human rights legislation and working on human rights issues for many years, and this is too important an opportunity to pass up to just get it done. We need to get it right, which means we need to have full consultation. My recommendation is that any committee hearings are not going to be adequate unless the minister agrees to broaden the scope of amendments beyond those which are traditionally allowed and allow for reasonable amendments. That's one point.

With respect to the issue of legal representation, while it is true that there has not been legal aid provided in many situations where human rights complaints are being pursued, it perhaps wasn't as important under the old system as it will be under the new system, because the commission is going to be relieved of its investigatory and public prosecutorial abilities under this new legislation, which makes it all the more important, because people will be otherwise left with nothing, that they need to have this essential legal aid assistance.

Finally, there's no guarantee that people will actually get a hearing under the tribunal, under the new system. There is the ability on the part of the tribunal to either accept or reject the hearing of a complaint, and the complaints won't proceed unless they are allowed to by the tribunal. There's also a wide variety of methods in which the tribunal can proceed, and it is to proceed in the most expeditious way possible. The question is, for whom?

**The Acting Speaker:** The Attorney General has two minutes in which to respond.

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** I want to thank the member for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, the member for Lanark-Carleton and the member for Whitby-Ajax for their comments. The nature of the member for Whitby-Ajax's comments and her question today indicated a desire to



ask tough questions about the nuts and bolts of this, and I appreciate that. I also appreciate, by the way—all members of this House—that in my debate I enjoyed a heckle-free 40 minutes or whatever it was, and I certainly want to reciprocate.

One thing the member for Lanark–Carleton said, which obviously the justice critic for the NDP disagrees with, is that this ought not to be a partisan debate. I agree with the member for Lanark–Carleton: It ought not to be, but clearly the NDP has chosen to make it so.

The motivation and direction for the NDP's position on this issue is entirely political. It is not the nuts and bolts and the substance of it. Helen Henderson, the Toronto Star's disabilities columnist, has written two columns, one saying firstly that this rights debate has been marred by Chicken Littles—we heard that from the justice critic for the NDP—and a second column which again asks very tough questions in it, but said this:

"Everyone agrees change is needed." The government "has delivered promising ideas for efficient, effective, accessible justice." The government "has nothing to lose by listening and learning. Public consultations this spring could translate into strong legislation on human rights reform this fall."

I entirely agree. The government can and will benefit from public hearings, but let us do this. Let us take this opportunity to in fact bring forward to this House for a vote a stronger human rights system for victims of discrimination.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** At the outset, I'd like to indicate that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Whitby–Ajax, who was a highly respected lawyer prior to entering the assembly a few weeks ago as the result of a by-election. She will be having carriage in this legislation for our caucus, and she will get into more of the detail surrounding the intricacies of the legislation. My comments will be more general in nature. I'm talking about my observations as an MPP over my years in this place with respect to the operations of the commission and the tribunal.

I don't often agree with the current Attorney General, but I do share his view that a change with respect to this is long overdue. Of course, he couldn't escape spending some time patting himself on the back with respect to this initiative; I think self-congratulation is a character trait of the Attorney General. In any event, I do agree that it has been long overdue. I guess our difference, and he predicted it, would be with respect to how this was carried out.

When he was first appointed to cabinet, he was assigned responsibilities for democratic renewal. For some reason, those responsibilities have been taken from him. Perhaps actions belie words with respect to how this and other initiatives have been carried forward by the Attorney General.

1700

I share the view of my colleague from Lanark–Carleton to some degree concerning the initiative that

could have been carried out through first reading, so that we could have had more extensive consultation prior to the legislation coming into the House. His argument, which I think is a valid one, is that that would have given the government opportunities for extensive input without tying it into specific language. That's one of the drawbacks, I agree, based on his experience around this place and mine. Once legislation is tabled for first reading and we go through second reading, which we're beginning today, it's a more difficult proposition for any government to dramatically alter the direction they have decided to take. We have seen occasions—it happened within our own government—when significant amendments did come forward through the committee process, but it's a rare occurrence. Governments are loath to make those kinds of admissions of error or misdirection once they've gotten to the stage of going through and completing second reading debate and having a vote and seeing a referral to committee. So first reading would have been an opportunity to do that.

I think as well, in talking about democratic renewal and providing members of this assembly with more extensive opportunities to debate significant initiatives like the reform of human rights legislation, that this is the sort of thing, from my perspective, that could and should have been referred to a select committee of the Legislature. There are significant roles that we have seen select committees play over the years, whether on the energy file or on a range of other important initiatives, which involved members of this Legislature from all walks of life and from all corners of the province.

In my view, what happens in situations like this, where the Attorney General has made reference to a group that was involved in providing input, is that you get vested interests; you get people with a particular bias who tend to staff these committees that have been appointed by the government of the day. I think it colours the final version that comes forward, and you don't hear from the ordinary Joe or Jane, if you will, in terms of what their concerns would be. The member from Whitby–Ajax will be speaking in terms of the party line. I'm giving you more my views as a layperson and as someone who has had to deal with complaints over the years—not too many in my office, but certainly a number. I wouldn't say it's on a regular basis, but over the course of the year I make a number of referrals of constituents to the Human Rights Commission.

One of the problems I see, again from sitting back and observing their activities over the years—and I know that in many respects they are performing worthwhile duties and responsibilities in providing support and assistance on many occasions to people who otherwise simply wouldn't have that support and assistance. But it often bothers me, in situations—and these are perhaps anomalies; they're not the normal course of activity of the Human Rights Commission. But one jumps out at me, I guess because I lived around the corner from this place and enjoyed access to the facility which others, for reasons of disability, were unable to access and a complaint



was filed. I'm talking about the Uptown Theatre on Yonge Street south of Bloor. The Human Rights Commission, apparently based on a complaint—I don't know if this was self-initiated; I can't recall that specific detail. It was a beautiful old theatre; I think one of the largest, if not the largest seating theatre remaining in the city of Toronto. They were ordered to install, I believe, an elevator, escalators and so on—they may have had an escalator; I think it was an elevator—and the cost was going to be very prohibitive in terms of all the changes and capital investments that had to be made. The theatre said, "We simply can't do this. We can't get enough return on the investment to justify continuing the operation of the theatre. As a result of this ultimatum, we have to close the theatre." I think that's a real loss to the community, and it's regrettable if the government of the day—an arm of the government—says, "We're going to require you to do this."

You provide a service. You provide an attraction to a municipality that has some benefit to the municipality, has some benefit, over the years, to thousands and thousands of people. If a government or an agency of the government is going to make a decision that is going to obligate you to make a decision to close and no longer provide that benefit to a great many other people in the community, perhaps there is an obligation upon the government to participate in making it make sense from a financial perspective. That's the sort of thing that always gets lost in the shuffle. There's no opportunity for that sort of option to be provided. That's the sort of commonsense approach that I would like to see taken to these decisions.

They may be few and far between, but that's certainly one that jumped out at me, because I was one of those part-time residents of the city who enormously enjoyed that theatre over some 20 years and felt it was a service, if you will, a benefit, if you will, to thousands and thousands of people. And also providing employment for a significant number of people—students as well who were able to gain employment there on a part-time basis. All of that was lost because of a requirement by the Human Rights Commission to make a significant investment. Again, I say that those are the kinds of things that if we could build in—and I don't know how we do that. Perhaps it's through the appointment process—I'm not sure—but it would be helpful if we could see some sort of commonsense approach and perhaps some monies available to address those, I think, legitimate concerns that the folks who have to respond to the decisions made by the commission—and many of them certainly are not out to do harm to the community or to those who are less fortunate in society. They are doing business in a way that they have been doing business for many, many years, and now, faced with the realities of society's desire to provide those kinds of services to all in our community, sometimes simply can't for financial reasons or other reasons respond in an adequate way. Perhaps we have to look at providing them with some kind of support or assistance to be able to do that without penalizing them

and penalizing in many respects a great number of other people who are affected by those decisions.

We can also talk about the funding issues. It was interesting that our critic for this legislation, the member from Whitby-Ajax, posed a question to the Attorney General today about funding and the changes that are being made, and the only public commitment he has made to date apparently is an additional \$1 million. I believe it's a topping up of \$1 million on an annualized basis. She rightfully pointed out the three new bodies being created under this legislation. How are they going to be appropriately funded? As we all know in this place, it's question period, not answer period. The Attorney General avoided answering the question and got into political rhetoric and talking about the past, as they are wont to do on a very regular basis in this place, rather than dealing in specifics with how he's going to accomplish these objectives that he's laid out in the bill. I don't think he made any reference to it in his contribution here this evening, either.

I think those are important questions which at some point along this path I believe he or his representatives are going to have to spell out in some detail. Certainly when the bill goes to committee that question is not going to be as easily escapable as it perhaps is in one- or two-minute responses during question period. I think it is a valid question if you look at the issue of monies and the projections of the government with respect to the budget in the justice sector for this government being flatlined. The member for Whitby-Ajax mentioned that.

1710

We also know that a few months ago, when a document called Justice Modernization was somehow found in the hands of the media and some of the recommendations there were made public, the Attorney General and his colleague the Minister of Community Safety had signed off on recommendations to cabinet that would have seen \$339 million cut from the justice budgets of both the Attorney General's ministry and the community safety and corrections ministry. How does that jibe with what we're hearing here today? When that became public knowledge, especially in the wake of all of the gun crime in the city of Toronto last summer, the government panicked, I guess, and refused to accept the cutback recommendations of the two justice ministers. Now we have him here indicating that we're going ahead with these changes, which are going to create new bodies in government, but again failing to tell us where the monies are going to come from.

If they flatline the budget, that would suggest to any casual observer that the monies are going to have to come from some other part of the ministry. I think we have a right to know what is the projected cost of the creation of these new bodies on an annualized basis and, if this is not new money, where the Attorney General is suggesting those monies are going to come from. What programs or agencies of the government are going to suffer as a result? I think those are legitimate questions that require a response.



There is no question—I said this from the outset—that problems have been around at the Human Rights Commission for some time, especially the backlog. I would suggest this is not unique to the Human Rights Commission; we see it in a number of other agencies. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which we hear has a backlog of 10,000 cases, is another agency that falls under the responsibility of the Attorney General. So hopefully the minister will be moving on that one in the not-too-distant future as well.

Some issues have been raised as well about the independence of the commission, the fact that it does answer to the Attorney General, and the appointments to the commission. The chair may be a Premier's appointment; I'm not sure. But the members of the commission themselves are all order-in-council appointments from the Attorney General. Again, it's a very politicized structure, with people who have and can have—I shouldn't say "who have," but who can have clear biases that reflect the political position, the ideology, of the government of the day. You may say, well, that's appropriate. I'm not sure that that is appropriate in this specific case. It might be more appropriate to have the human rights chair be a servant of this place, like the Provincial Auditor, as an example, and reporting back on an annual basis to this place rather than to a politician, a member of the executive council. I think it, again, may tend to colour the approach taken by the chair in terms of his or her responsibilities to be more reflective of the political will of the government of the day. Is that the sort of thing that we wish to see occurring here? I would suggest that it may well not be. That's the sort of issue that I think is worthy of being the subject of discussion and debate as we go forward with this legislation.

I know we'll be hearing more again about consultation. There was a long list of individuals and organizations and firms who felt they were not consulted or were totally ignored in the process towards development of this bill.

Certainly one of the most critical that I've seen was the African Canadian Legal Clinic. They were, I think, deeply offended by the remarks of, I gather, the Premier, in reading this letter, where the Premier had indicated that the Attorney General had consulted with the organization on the bill. The writer, Margaret Parsons, indicates that this is not true and that either the Premier was misinformed by the minister or something happened in terms of the messaging. I'm quoting from this letter, which I'll provide for Hansard afterwards:

"The African Canadian Legal Clinic has not been consulted at any time by the Attorney General.... To the contrary, we have been ignored and deliberately excluded by the Attorney General and his staff from any consultations on the bill, despite our many requests."

They go on to say that the announcement of the legislation came as a complete surprise. They've made subsequent requests for a meeting, including one to the Premier himself, with respect to this, and they've gone unheeded.

"The African Canadian Legal Clinic was not informed of nor invited to the prebriefing by ministry staff which took place the day the bill was introduced, while others were asked and chosen to attend."

Again, I think this points to a political bias perhaps with respect to how this would be presented, if there were people who had concerns and wanted to make sure that those were heard—not necessarily criticisms, but concerns and constructive suggestions on how this matter could be approached—and they were not only not allowed to enter the door; they weren't even shown the door, let alone provided an invitation to enter and participate. But then to have it suggested by not just a member of the government but the Premier that they were consulted had to be deeply offensive and hurtful, I would suggest.

Another organization that I have a letter from is the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic. Again, they have written to the Premier to "express our strong disappointment with the ... decision to proceed ... without first consulting with those most affected by the proposal." Again, they're referencing the question period of April 27 and the Premier referencing consultation with community organizations, "including our clinic." They suggest that the brief exchange of correspondence that they had was anything but consultation and have asked the Premier to clarify his comments made during that question period.

There's a whole list of groups who have expressed concern for a variety of reasons, and perhaps our critic will get into more detail during her comments with respect to specific concerns that all of these organizations have. I'll just mention them. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance certainly have been very proactive in contacting, I suspect, all members of the assembly with respect to their concerns. They obviously share the common sentiment that the system isn't working properly now, but they have another range of concerns, which I will let our critic expand upon. There's the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, B'nai Brith Canada, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, the Chinese Canadian National Council, Community Living Ontario, the Disabled Women's Network of Ontario, legal clinics—this is the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the South Asian Legal Clinic, Parkdale Community Legal Services—the MS Society, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Operation Black Vote Canada, our old friends in OPSEU, Toronto Residents in Partnership, and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. They are the only groups—only? There's quite a significant number who are very critical of the proposed reforms.

1720

I suspect that once this legislation goes out to committee—we've advertised the legislation and encouraged people to take a look at it on the website—we're going to find even larger numbers of people coming forward, in-



dividuals and organizations, who have expressed concern. I think we can lay this at the doorstep of the government's failure to appropriately consult. There were opportunities there, as we mentioned earlier, either at first reading or through a select committee of the Legislature. Either one of those approaches would have been very helpful and certainly would have been allowing us and the government to avoid the concerns that we're now hearing about and that are going to, to some degree, delay the passage of this legislation.

We have to ensure, as opposition members, that people who do have these concerns have an opportunity to be heard—and not a 10-minute presentation where they don't have time to put their own concerns on the record, let alone members of the committee adequately questioning them to ensure we have appropriate input. That too often is the case, where we try to jam in a number of people who want to appear before a committee. We jam it into two, three or four days and we simply don't have an opportunity for them to make the contribution they'd like to make or for members of this place to have an opportunity to question.

We hear an awful lot about democratic renewal from the Liberal government. Of course, we've seen little to substantiate that over their almost three years in office. This is another case in point, where we should have been dealing with this in another way so that we aren't facing this kind of criticism, or the government isn't facing this kind of criticism.

I'm perhaps getting off the party message a little bit here, but I talked at the outset about common sense in how these issues are approached. I know we have to look at the people who require assistance and we have to make sure they receive that assistance. There has to be a way, clearly, in terms of dealing with frivolous complaints so that they don't tie up the system. There has to be a way of assessing that appropriately and accurately.

I mentioned the Uptown Theatre, but there are other issues. Again, they may be anomalies. I don't know; I have to base it on people. I'm no expert in this field and I will be the first to say that. I had a call from a reeve of a township in my riding who had had a complaint filed against them by someone who appeared before council. A complaint was lodged about something he said in response to a delegation. The complaint was filed with the Human Rights Commission. He told me that he was advised by the council for the municipality, "Yes, we'd win this if we took this through the process, but it's going to take a significant period of time and it's going to cost the municipality at least \$100,000 to take this complaint through the process." That's the other side of the coin. What happened? The council apparently reimbursed—I guess "reimbursed" isn't the right word—paid this constituency \$50,000 to withdraw the complaint, because they were told by legal counsel for the municipality that it would have cost the taxpayers at least \$100,000 to pursue it through all of the processes that are necessary. That's something that we should be looking at and discussing as well.

There should be some opportunity, if someone makes these complaints, in my view—I'm not a lawyer. I'm looking at the other side of this, as well as at the folks who have legitimate complaints to take forward and need help, assistance and support. But what about the people where, at the end of the day, there has been no substance proved to the allegation and people have been pulled through the ringer? What recourse is available to them? I think those are the kinds of things that we should be talking about as well.

The Attorney General talked about his wish to have some kind of team fanning out across the province to investigate companies and individuals to see if they're violating the Human Rights Code. I think that's a pretty scary prospect, a pretty scary vision from my perspective, because you're generating a lot of things that perhaps don't have merit and putting a lot of good citizens in this province under threat, and financial ruin perhaps, with that kind of an agenda. Fortunately, that's not going to happen, but I think it gives us some insight into the mindset of the Attorney General of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have taken up about half our time. With your permission, I will now yield the floor to my colleague from Whitby—Ajax.

**Mrs. Elliott:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 107, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus. I'd also like to thank my colleague the member from Leeds—Grenville for his comments.

The Attorney General introduced this bill on April 26, 2006. Since its introduction, there have been significant concerns expressed about this bill by disability and anti-racist groups. I want to add my own comments and concerns today, but before doing so, it might be helpful to step back for a moment to consider the purposes for which the Human Rights Code was established, in order to consider these comments in context.

The Human Rights Code was passed by the Robarts government in 1962. The preamble of the code states:

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and is in accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as proclaimed by the United Nations;

"And whereas it is public policy in Ontario to recognize the dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination that is contrary to law, and having as its aim the creation of a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and able to contribute fully to the development and well-being of the community and the province;

"And whereas these principles have been confirmed in Ontario by a number of enactments of the Legislature and it is desirable to revise and extend the protection of human rights in Ontario...."

The code proceeds to state that "Every person has a right to equal treatment" with respect to services, accom-



modation, and freedom from harassment because of "race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability."

These rights are currently enforced by the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Tribunal. The Human Rights Commission has a number of responsibilities, including the promotion of the aims of the act, the development of public and education programs aimed at eliminating discrimination, and to initiate investigations into incidents of discrimination. But its primary responsibility is to initiate investigations following complaints of discrimination by individual complainants.

1730

The commission is given broad powers of investigation in assessing the merits of each complaint. Following its investigation, the commission has an obligation to attempt to effect a settlement of the complaint. If the settlement attempts fail and where it appears to the commission that the subject matter of the complaint is not frivolous or vexatious, it will refer the subject matter of the complaint to the tribunal. The tribunal then holds a hearing to determine whether a right of the complainant has been infringed, to determine who infringed the right and to decide upon an appropriate order. Orders may be made directing a party to do whatever is necessary in order to achieve compliance with the act, both in respect to the complainant and in respect to future practices, and may order a party to make financial restitution as well as a monetary award not exceeding \$10,000 where the infringement has been engaged in wilfully or recklessly. Finally, it's important to note that any orders of the tribunal can be appealed to the Divisional Court of Ontario for a final determination. That's the background.

Now on to the proposed amendments to the code. In his statement on April 26, the Attorney General noted it was time to modernize Ontario's human rights legislation and that the goal of the amendments was to make our human rights system stronger, faster and more effective. We would certainly agree that the time has come to modernize the human rights system in this province and to eliminate the tremendous delay involved in having a complaint concerning a violation of the code investigated. Currently, there are over 2,400 complaints in the system that remain unresolved, with no apparent plan to speed up the process for their investigation. Justice delayed is justice denied. This legislation will not in any way make our human rights system stronger, faster or more effective. It is a deeply flawed piece of legislation that has ignored the legitimate concerns of many Ontarians and has broken faith with the promises made by this government to disability groups and anti-racist organizations.

I would like to spend a few moments discussing the major problems with the legislation as drafted. In February 2006, the Attorney General announced his intention to proceed with the amendments to the code as currently drafted. After this announcement, many important community groups and individuals contacted the government

and urged that there be open, accessible, province-wide public consultations and that these happen before any bill was introduced to reform the Human Rights Code.

One of the groups who contacted the Attorney General was the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance. In a letter from its chair, Ms. Catherine Dunphy, to the Attorney General, dated April 12 of this year, the alliance asked the Attorney General and the executive council to take the following steps:

(1) The government would not now introduce the legislation that we see before us.

(2) Instead, the government would launch an open, accessible public consultation on any options for reforming human rights enforcement.

(3) This would be a time-limited consultation, not to drag on, but to be finished before the end of July of this year, with a view to a bill being introduced in the Legislature in September 2006.

(4) The consultations would be modelled after the public consultations which took place prior to the passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

(5) The consultations should be open to considering any option, including a reconsideration of the plans announced by the Attorney General in February 2006.

Notwithstanding the reasonable and practical suggestions, this government proceeded on the basis of the February plan. Although the Attorney General has indicated that this legislation is the culmination of perhaps more study and consultation than ever before in the history of this Legislature, in fact he is relying on information from the Cornish report, a study that was done 14 years ago, and has refused to listen to the legitimate concerns of individuals and groups who are dedicated to working with human rights issues and work with very vulnerable people on a daily basis. Little wonder that they feel betrayed by this government.

Secondly, this bill fails on many counts to provide more effective human rights protection for Ontarians and is a fundamental betrayal of the 2003 Liberal election promises to Ontarians with disabilities. The disability community was promised a disabilities act which would see the Human Rights Commission as the investigative and enforcement agency. Less than a year after the disabilities act was passed, the government proposes to eviscerate the commission. Now, the code gives everyone who files a timely, non-frivolous human rights complaint the right to have the Human Rights Commission conduct a public investigation of the matter. Bill 107 abolishes that right, and there is no requirement for a public investigation. Instead, all complaints will be referred directly to the tribunal, which can either dismiss or hear the complaint.

There are many problems with this so-called direct-access model. First, many of the people who wish to put forward complaints to the tribunal are among the most vulnerable people in our communities. With these amendments, they will be required to conduct their own investigations and present their own cases to the tribunal.



This will be difficult, if not impossible, for many of these complainants without legal assistance, and has not been dealt with in the bill in any kind of substantive manner. As a result, there will be many complaints that simply cannot be brought before the tribunal, thereby restricting access to justice for our most vulnerable citizens.

With respect to the operation of the tribunal, there are significant concerns regarding the conduct of hearings. Under the current system, the commission conducts an investigation and acts as the public prosecutor at hearings before the tribunal. With the new system, the tribunal decides whether or not to hold a hearing and can dismiss a complaint on much broader grounds than those available to the commission. The tribunal can then proceed with a hearing, mediation or any other means that are the "most expeditious" way possible, but the question becomes, expeditious to whom?

Currently, the code provides that a decision of the tribunal can be appealed to the Divisional Court. Under the proposed system, the right of appeal from a tribunal decision will not be as of right but only if the tribunal ruling is "patently unreasonable," which of course is a far tougher test.

These are fundamental changes to the human rights system that do nothing to enhance access to justice for our most vulnerable citizens, but instead restrict it further.

Finally, there is the question of funding. The proposed amendments to the code will establish the anti-racism and disability secretariats. There is also the issue of the backlog of more than 2,400 unresolved complaints. The Attorney General has stated that all Ontarians, regardless of income or personal circumstances, will be assured "full legal representation" in presenting their complaints before the tribunal, yet there is nothing in the amendments that strictly addresses this issue. The only reference is in section 46 of the bill, which states that the minister "may enter into agreements with prescribed persons or entities for the purposes of providing legal services and such other services as may be prescribed to applicants or other parties to a proceeding before the tribunal." Any agreement may provide for payment for the services by the ministry.

The Attorney General has stated that there is going to be "\$1 million plus" for these initiatives, but how can one reasonably assume, with the establishment of three new organizations, being the two secretariats plus the proposed legal support centre, which isn't even referred to in the legislation, that all of this can reasonably be done with this much money? There's also the fact that the justice budget sector has been flatlined until at least 2008-09. I would suggest that under the circumstances, this simply can't happen.

These are only my comments. There are many, many other organizations that have come forward to address these concerns with respect to the proposed legislation. I'd like to refer to some of them, because they're really illustrative of the many, varied concerns and the many, many groups that have come forward with concerns to express with respect to this proposed legislation.

1740

First of all, with respect to some general comments from stakeholders regarding the operation of the proposed new system, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada has said, "Although we want change, this bill has quite a number of flaws. These flaws are going to impinge on the more vulnerable communities in this province."

Similarly, the Chinese Canadian National Council has said, "Going to the direct-access model is putting together an invisible barrier for those with limited means. Those who are disadvantaged will have less access to justice."

The Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic states that, "Chinese-Canadian community advocacy groups are outraged by the Ontario government's decision to quickly push through amendments to the province's Human Rights Code that can only serve to diminish the rights of all Ontarians."

Cynthia Pay, a legal aid lawyer and director of the Chinese Canadian National Council, states, "Many groups from racialized communities and disability groups voiced their concerns about these so-called reforms before Bill 107 was introduced last week. This bill gives too much power to the tribunal to dismiss cases without proper and fair hearing."

The executive director of the African Canadian Legal Clinic states, "The Attorney General has absolutely gutted and taken away our right to a strong human rights enforcement and protection body in this province."

"Simply getting rid of the commission's gatekeeper function is not going to address [the] gaping resource problem. 'Direct access' may simply mean the transfer of delays and the gatekeeping function from the commission to the tribunal." This is from the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, African Canadian Legal Clinic and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario in a joint op-ed for the Toronto Star on March 13 this year.

Next, again from the same piece by the same groups: "It will be a shame if the Ontario Human Rights Commission goes down the path travelled by its counterpart in British Columbia. The Liberal government in BC gutted its commission in 2002, leaving the tribunal as the only vehicle residents have to enforce their rights. Interestingly, the BC government cloaked the changes under the guise of 'direct access.' The BC model has been criticized roundly by advocates across the country and even by some international human rights experts."

With respect to the issue of funding and the legal aid aspect of this legislation, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada states, "The bill would no longer protect the ability of the complainant to make a claim without worrying about money. There is the risk that the defendant, be it a large corporation or the government, will have the capacity to represent itself, while the complainant will not."

The African Canadian Legal Clinic states, "You need to actually have the funds to do the job you have to do,



but this has not been forthcoming [from the government]. There is no guarantee [in this legislation] that there will be a human rights legal support centre."

Even OPSEU president Leah Casselman states, "This proposed legislation is a disaster for human rights in Ontario; it does nothing to improve the system. It takes away guaranteed rights to investigation and legal support and allows the tribunal to charge user fees."

Avvy Go, the director of the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, states, "What Premier Dalton McGuinty's government is doing is an affront to human rights in Ontario. Bill 107 in its current form will only serve to weaken the province's human rights system and will remove legal and institutional supports that currently serve the victims of discrimination."

On the issue of investigative powers, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada states, "Under the proposed system, the competition would be disengaged from the investigative process, even with respect to systemic matters. When these powers are eliminated, individuals are compromised because they have no independent agency to assist them in finding evidence."

With respect to the issue of the secretariat: "The secretariat is not going to be effective. It will basically have the same research functions as the commission, according to this legislation." It goes on and on. You can see from these comments what the various groups have to say about this legislation with respect to funding, with respect to the substantive nature of the legislation and with respect to the lack of consultation before this legislation was introduced.

It's imperative, because the issue is so important to all Ontarians, that the matter be dealt with properly, and it's important, with respect to all of the groups, that work with all of these people with disabilities and anti-racist groups that we do it right. What we need to do is make sure that any amendments that are reasonable and practical are dealt with, since we did not have the opportunity to have this matter go following first reading of this bill. We need to make sure that we get it right, not to rush it through in a hurry but make sure we spend the time we need. After 40 years, this is a unique opportunity. We shouldn't squander it. I hope the Attorney General will address these issues that so many groups have brought forward.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kormos:** I am thankful to Ms. Elliott, the member for Whitby-Ajax, for her contribution to this second reading debate, and I look forward to working with her on the committee which reviews Bill 107.

I'm afraid I can't be quite as charitable as some of the others in this chamber about the bill because, quite frankly, at this point in time the only solution New Democrats see is to simply withdraw it, because the fundamental flaw is the dismantling of the commission and the failure to understand the real thrust of reform. You want reform? Then do what people have called upon you to do for what seems like from the beginning of time and make the commission responsible to the Legislative Assembly. Make

the commissioner an officer of the Legislative Assembly. Give that commission and tribunal true independence from the government of the day and political influence.

The government had the opportunity to do that in this bill, didn't it? But it failed miserably once again in that regard, because it continues to leave the commissioner accountable only to the government through the Attorney General, and turns her or him into a mere political servant, when that person and that role should be a role of true independence.

I quite frankly say to you that we're going to have a lot more to say next time this bill is called on the second day of second reading, that the government, in my view, has not only misunderstood the Cornish and La Forest reports, but also misunderstands what's going on out there, what's really happening out there in the pursuit of redress around complaints, be it discrimination via race or disability or any number of discriminatory bases enumerated in the code.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I guess I can be a little more charitable than the member for Niagara Centre. Instead of focusing on the process of how the Ontario Human Rights Commission operates, I think Ontarians are more concerned with the outcomes and with the results. That's what this bill addresses; it addresses outcomes. One of those outcomes is very simple. It's a mechanism that's 40 years old. Try to imagine if you were still driving a car circa the mid-1960s. That car, however lovingly you might have maintained it, is 40 years old and at the very least needs a complete overhaul.

That's pretty much what this legislation does. It strengthens the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It focuses it to be able to address systemic issues. It allows it to use education, promotion, public advocacy, research and monitoring. The commission retains the capacity to bring systemic issues before the tribunal. It retains the capacity to intervene in an individual's complaint where the systemic issues warrant. A new complaints process is going to be introduced. It allows direct access to the Human Rights Tribunal.

The bill would establish within the Ontario Human Rights Commission two new secretariats that don't exist now, to conduct research and to develop public policy. One would be an anti-racism secretariat and the other a disability secretariat, both issues that this Legislature has focused on, both areas the subject of legislation in and of themselves. This would enable the Ontario Human Rights Commission to catch up with much of the legislation this body has been writing for decades.

We would establish a human rights legal support centre. We'd be able to provide support to people who need it, when they need it, in the way they need it.

1750

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** It's a pleasure to be here this evening. I'd like to congratulate my seatmate for making a wonderful speech today and giving us a very thorough précis of how she feels about the bill. One thing she touched on was on the lack of open and accessible consultation on the reform of the



human rights system. We believe it should have been held before introducing the legislation. I think right now would be a good time to pick up on it on the other side.

We're hoping they'll take what is going on in here today, in terms of this debate, and listen to some of the community groups that have come to our party or through the media voicing their concerns. Some community organizations have indicated that they are insulted that the government has claimed to have consulted with them, and they'd like an explanation and an apology.

I'd like to read an excerpt from a letter from the African Canadian Legal Clinic to the Premier on May 1, 2006. They say, "We read with great concern your remarks in the Legislature on April 27, 2006, with respect to your government's human rights bill.

"You claimed in question period that the Attorney General had consulted with the African Canadian Legal Clinic ... on this bill. This is simply not true....

"The African Canadian Legal Clinic has not been consulted at any time by the Attorney General on this bill. To the contrary, we have been ignored and deliberately excluded by the Attorney General and his staff from any consultation on the bill, despite our many requests.

"The announcement of the proposed legislation by the Attorney General in February 2006 came as a complete surprise to us. Since then, our requests for a meeting and consultation, including to you, have gone unheeded. Our inquiries as to when the bill would be tabled went unanswered....

"Given the above, it is indeed a shame that you and your government continue to ... mislead the public on the consultation process and on the real impact of Bill 107 on the protection and enforcement of the human rights of African Canadians and other marginalized communities."

I do hope, now that this is read into the record, that there will be some action with the African Canadian Legal Clinic by the Premier.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I just want to reinforce some of the opposition with respect to this particular bill. Some was mentioned by the opposition members. This comes from a Toronto Sun article on March 17, quoting some participants in that particular press conference: "The provincial government is privatizing the enforcement of human rights complaints at the peril of those who are being discriminated against, disability groups are warning.

"The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance says the governing Grits are weakening human rights by planning reforms to the Ontario Human Rights Commission that will eliminate its role in leading cases to the human rights tribunal.

"It will force discrimination victims ... to investigate their own complaints," said Gary Malkowski, a former MPP who is also deaf. "It is wrong of the Dalton McGuinty government to privatize the human rights enforcement on the backs of those discriminated against." ...

"The disability coalition, which held a news conference at Queen's Park yesterday morning, said the plan leaves many complainants in the lurch, either depending on an already strained legal aid program or having to pay for their cases—often against deep corporate or government pockets—on their own.

"There's been a real sense we've been treated unfairly," said David Lepofsky, former coalition chairman."

Let me also read from a letter by Avvy Go, Margaret Parsons and Uzma Shakir, which says the following: "Those who favour the new model say the reform is a step in the right direction because it will allow complainants to take their cases straight to the human rights tribunal.

"In exchange for the 'direct access,' however, the commission will no longer help individuals with the investigation and prosecution of their complaints. Instead, the commission will dedicate its resources to public education, research and monitoring systemic discrimination.

"Is this the kind of reform our communities ... need? We think not."

It goes to make a number of other points, but I think the important point is that now the government is going to tell complainants they have to rely on their own financial resources to fight, often, big corporations or big government. That's entirely against the reason the commission was set up in the first place and what it should be doing for those individuals.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Whitby—Ajax has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mrs. Elliott:** I think all the comments we've heard today have certainly pointed to the need to revise the existing human rights legislation, but this is truly a unique opportunity. We really need to make sure that we make the right decisions and do the right thing for the 1.5 million people living with disabilities in this province and the many, many groups who are subjected to racism each and every day in our communities. We have an obligation to all of these people to take the time that we need—not to drag things on for months and months, but to take the time that we need to come up with legislation that is clear, coherent, properly funded, that makes sense and that applies fairly to all Ontarians.

I would certainly urge the Attorney General to take these comments into consideration, knowing that so many groups have commented on and voiced their concerns with respect to the legislation. I would urge the Attorney General to take them into serious consideration so that we end up with legislation at the end of the day that is going to be fair to everyone concerned.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being nearly 6 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

# CONTENTS

Monday 8 May 2006

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Darlington nuclear generating station</b>	
Mr. O'Toole.....	3625
<b>Jasmeet Sidhu</b>	
Mr. Kular.....	3625
<b>Ministry of Natural Resources</b>	
Mr. Miller.....	3625
<b>ESL funding</b>	
Mr. Marchese.....	3626
<b>Stephen Lewis Foundation</b>	
Mr. Wong.....	3626
<b>Hockeyville</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski.....	3626
<b>Exchange students</b>	
Mr. Patten.....	3626
<b>Police vehicles</b>	
Mrs. Jeffrey.....	3627
<b>Public health</b>	
Mr. Wilkinson.....	3627

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on finance and economic affairs</b>	
Mr. Hoy.....	3627
Report adopted.....	3627

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Ronald McDonald House (Hamilton) Act, 2006, Bill Pr18, Ms. Marsales</b>	
Agreed to.....	3627

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Bradley.....	3627
Agreed to.....	3628
<b>Committee sittings</b>	
Mr. Bradley.....	3647
Agreed to.....	3647

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Nursing Week</b>	
Mr. Smitherman.....	3628
Mrs. Witmer.....	3630
Ms. Martel.....	3631
<b>Arts education</b>	
Ms. Di Cocco.....	3629
Mrs. Munro.....	3630
Mr. Marchese.....	3630

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Ontario drug benefit program</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	3634
Mr. Smitherman.....	3634
<b>Cancer treatment</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	3636
Mr. Smitherman.....	3636
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	3637
Mr. Smitherman.....	3637
<b>Ontario College of Teachers</b>	
Mr. Klees.....	3638
Ms. Pupatello.....	3638
<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	3639
Mr. Smitherman.....	3639
<b>Student literacy</b>	
Mrs. Van Bommel.....	3640
Ms. Pupatello.....	3640
<b>Energy from waste</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski.....	3640
Mrs. Cansfield.....	3640
<b>French-language education</b>	
Mr. Kormos.....	3640
Mrs. Dombrowsky.....	3641
<b>Ontario economy</b>	
Mr. McNeely.....	3641
Mr. Cordiano.....	3641
<b>Municipal elections</b>	
Mr. Hudak.....	3641
Mr. Gerretsen.....	3642
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Marchese.....	3642
Ms. Pupatello.....	3642
<b>Tourism</b>	
Mrs. Mitchell.....	3643
Mr. Bradley.....	3643
<b>Human rights</b>	
Mrs. Elliott.....	3643
Mr. Bryant.....	3643

## PETITIONS

<b>Speech and language services</b>	
Mr. Hardeman.....	3644
Mr. Wilson.....	3644
<b>Identity theft</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht.....	3644
<b>Community mediation</b>	
Mr. Delaney.....	3645
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. O'Toole.....	3645
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. Lalonde.....	3645
Mr. Ruprecht.....	3646
<b>Macular degeneration</b>	
Mr. Dunlop.....	3646

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006, Bill 107, Mr. Bryant</b>	
Mr. Bryant.....	3647, 3653
Mr. Sterling.....	3652
Mr. Kormos.....	3653, 3660
Mr. Arthurs.....	3653
Mrs. Elliott.....	3653, 3657, 3661
Mr. Runciman.....	3654
Mr. Delaney.....	3660
Ms. MacLeod.....	3660
Ms. Martel.....	3661
Debate deemed adjourned.....	3661

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Wearing of pins</b>	
Mr. Levac.....	3625
<b>Visitor</b>	
Ms. Pupatello.....	3631
<b>John Atkinson</b>	
Mr. Duncan.....	3631
Mr. Dunlop.....	3632
Mr. Hampton.....	3632
<b>VE Day</b>	
Mr. Bradley.....	3633
Ms. MacLeod.....	3633
Mr. Hampton.....	3634

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 8 mai 2006

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2006 modifiant le Code des droits de la personne, projet de loi 107, M. Bryant</b>	
Débat présumé ajourné.....	3661



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**Lundi 8 mai 2006**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 8 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 8 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION RESERVES ACT, 2006

### LOI DE 2006 SUR LES PARCS PROVINCIAUX ET LES RÉSERVES DE CONSERVATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 2, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 11, Loi édictant la Loi de 2005 sur les parcs provinciaux et les réserves de conservation, abrogeant la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux et la Loi sur la protection des régions sauvages et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** The member who had the floor on the last occasion is not here today, so we'll go to the next on the rotation. The member from Simcoe North.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I believe we're now in our fourth day of the debate on Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserve Act. What I would like to put on record today are a few comments about my riding of Simcoe North and the four provincial parks that I have in the riding, as well as make a few comments about some of the adjoining parks.

I have to tell you right up front, I'm someone who is a very, very strong supporter of Ontario parks. I know, just to sort of compliment the Ministry of Natural Resources, that each and every year they put out a calendar at the beginning of the year, and this year two of the parks in the calendar—one was the Awenda Provincial Park near Lafontaine in my riding, and the other was a nearby park, Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, which happens to be in my colleague Norm Miller's riding, who is also the critic for the Ministry of Natural Resources. We're very happy. I know it doesn't seem like a lot, but as I passed the calendar around and showed people, they were very proud that they were chosen as a couple of the most scenic parks in the province of Ontario.

I'm fortunate, as I said earlier, that I do support this legislation, and anything we can possibly do to strengthen our Ontario park system is an area that I would be pleased to support at any given time. But I want to put on record that in my riding I do have the Awenda Provincial Park, which is at Lafontaine. It's a park that I can tell you is huge in size. It has three beautiful beaches on Georgian Bay. Part of the Awenda Provincial Park is Giant's Tomb Island, which is one of the gems of Georgian Bay. It's an island that has remained basically natural. At one end of it there are a few leased lands and a few development sites for potential cottages or some types of homes in the future, but they're very few in number. This is one of the more beautiful islands in Georgian Bay and it's all part of the Awenda Provincial Park system. We're very pleased that that is in the riding. Each and every year that park draws capacity crowds all summer long, starting this weekend, I believe, or maybe it was last weekend. But right away, anyhow. This time of the year we get tremendous numbers of people up through that area for camping, and they have all the accessories to accommodate camping in that area.

## 1850

As well, I wanted to point out that I'm pleased that near the city of Orillia I have the Bass Lake Provincial Park, which is a park that is more—I guess if you could say anything, it's more of an urban park because it's near a city, but it draws a lot of campers as well. Bass Lake is a beautiful little lake just outside of Orillia. The staff at the Bass Lake park provide an excellent service to the community, and I can tell you that it's a park that gets booked up fairly quickly because they have a lot of services there and people have done an excellent job of providing those services to the general public. It's a park that has seen a lot of improvements over the year, with comfort stations and more improved campsites, that sort of thing, and it's also on a beautiful body of water.

If I go to the eastern end of my riding, I have the township of Ramara, and in the township of Ramara we have the McRae Point Provincial Park and the Mara Provincial Park, not too far apart, both beautiful parks on Lake Simcoe. Neither one of them is too far from Casino Rama. That's not to say that people go to the casino and then to the campground, but I can tell you that they add to the draw of that area for tourism. So we've got this huge casino that draws in 12,000 people per day to gamble and then to be provided entertainment. On top of that, we also have a number of beautiful campgrounds in that area, including these two. Both of those parks look



out on Strawberry Island, and if you recall, Strawberry Island is the location where, in 2001, the Pope came on his visit to Ontario.

So I wanted to put that on the record, that in the riding of Simcoe North we're extremely pleased that we have four beautiful provincial parks to help tourism, to help the environment, to help naturalists. People are proud of the provincial parks in my riding. As well, they employ a number of people, both students and some year-round help, who do an excellent job.

I'll be supporting the bill. I think that anything we can do in this House—of all the things that should be non-partisan, it should be our provincial park system, our natural heritage systems, areas of the province that attract people and give people a sense of the strength of the province of Ontario with these beautiful parklands and our natural heritage legacy. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this tonight. I think my time is almost up, and I would appreciate hearing any comments on my speech here this evening. Thanks so much.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm going to be able to speak to this bill in but a few minutes' time. Regrettably, we have only 10 minutes permitted us to speak to a bill that is not insubstantial. That is a sad reflection on the state of affairs, conditions, here at Queen's Park, where you've got 103 elected members, but for one who's moving to Quebec, who still expects to be an elected member—well, Mr. Kennedy, I trust, still expects to get his paycheque; one Gerard Kennedy, who doesn't have enough confidence in the French-as-a-second-language programs, the FSL programs in any number of community colleges.

Come on down to Niagara College, take the FSL program there. He can do it at night in a Bill 8 community, where we have a strong francophone—18%-plus of our population is francophone. So I say to Gerard Kennedy, don't abandon Ontario in the course of your political ambitions. Stick with the folks that brung you here. Dance with the people who brought you to the soiree. So I find it regrettable that 103 of us, shy one, Mr. Kennedy, who's off to Quebec to study French, with his family—he's going to rent a house, as we're told, going to settle in. He's moving lock, stock and barrel, and he's still going to sign those paycheques at the end of the month, on the dot. He's still got his office here at Queen's Park and he's got his office down there in Parkdale-High Park.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Is he getting paid?

**Mr. Kormos:** He's getting paid. He's pocketing the cash—no qualms about that. Has he no shame? It's incredible. Sometimes I'm still amazed by what I witness here.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I'm glad the member from Niagara Centre spoke about Bill 11. It was very refreshing and quite animated.

One thing he did mention to us was the time on task. Let me remind him—I know he wants to be fair about this—that we've had four days of debate on this bill.

There is a rule that says that when you get down to the seventh hour, you're only allowed the 10 minutes, so I'm sure that he would want to have that clarified for people, to let them know.

Quite frankly, straight to the member who spoke for his time, I appreciate the debate. I understand that he takes care of his riding and he's got some beautiful parks up there. He knows that when I went up there, we did visit them, and they are absolutely, knock-dead gorgeous. I want to thank him for pointing that out to us in today's debate.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member from Simcoe North, who seemed to be mainly promoting parks in the riding of Simcoe North. You can't blame him for promoting the beautiful area of Simcoe North, but I would like to point out to the member that there are far more parks in the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka—many more parks.

**Mr. Levac:** The battle's on.

**Mr. Miller:** Well, I haven't actually counted. There are at least 60 parks—probably more than that—in Parry Sound-Muskoka—some beautiful parks. A lot of them are important to their communities as well. There's Arrowhead Provincial Park, right near the town of Huntsville, which is used by a lot of the local people and visitors to the area. It has some recreational activities like camping, cross-country skiing and others. Mikisew Provincial Park is in the township of Machar. I've met with the Machar councillors and mayor, and they're quite concerned about getting Mikisew open earlier and also getting it on the provincial reservation system. I believe it's on the reservation system for camps, but it opens quite late in the year: It doesn't open on Victoria Day weekend, when a lot of the other ones open. Because it is so important for the township of Machar in terms of the economic activity it generates, they'd like to see it open earlier.

This bill we're talking about is not just dealing with parks that are higher-use parks, where camping is allowed. There's actually six classifications of parks and conservation reserves, the most remote and not touched by humans being wilderness class parks. There are actually wilderness class parks, nature reserve class parks, cultural heritage class parks, natural and environment class parks, waterway class parks and recreational class parks, plus conservation reserves.

We're looking forward to this bill going to committee so that anyone with an interest in it can make their points and viewpoint known.

**Ms. Martel:** It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate. I just want to indicate that I'll have the opportunity to speak to it here in a few minutes, after my colleague from Niagara Centre participates in the debate.

I think the important part is to note that we in the NDP do understand that after 50-some years it makes some good sense to have a revision of the parks act. There has been enough change in the technology and scientific background to give us a much better perspective about



how we need to manage, look after and better care for our protected areas.

To that end, we owe a great deal to both the MNR staff, who have done great work in this area, but also, frankly, to a lot of community-based organizations and provincial organizations who have essentially never let up in encouraging the government to have some more protected areas, to bring the best scientific information forward that would provide a good, sound reason for those areas to be protected. To those folks who have, for many years, lobbied various governments for more protected spaces, for better use of scientific information to protect those spaces—my hat's off to those people, who I hope were involved in the process of consultation that went on before the bill came forward and who will be able to come and give their perspective once this bill goes to committee, because I understand that is where it is headed.

We do recognize the need for change. We recognize there have been very significant changes in scientific understanding that would support the necessary change, and we hope that during the course of the public hearings there will be some good information that comes to those who sit on the committee to really flesh out how that needs to be done in the best possible way in the province.

1900

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Simcoe North has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I thank the members from Nickel Belt, Niagara Centre, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Brant for all of their comments on my short speech.

I just wanted to say that I concentrated on my riding. You have to remember in this House that the people who elected you come from your riding. I can tell you, as the MPP for Simcoe North, that we have a lot of different provincial issues at any given time, but something that very seldom comes to our office, or offices in a lot of rural parts of Ontario, is complaints about our provincial parks; it simply doesn't happen. I think all governments have done a fairly good job of allowing the ministry to operate the Ontario parks program. I consider them to be jewels in our ridings. They employ people. They are a natural attraction to citizens from other parts of the province who like to come to visit or to camp or just to see some of the natural heritage systems that occur in the provincial parks.

I don't think there's anything wrong with someone standing in this House and bragging about their riding and bragging about the parks, even if your colleague gets up and thinks he's got a better riding and a better group of parks in his riding. That's all part of the reason we're here, to tell people what beautiful things we have in our ridings. I consider the four provincial parks in my riding, as well as a number of other parks that we have, like the Copeland forest and thousands of acres of crown land—these are all areas that are government-controlled as well. They all contribute to a great parks system, and I'm proud that I have an area that has a number of them included in it.

### **The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Kormos:** There's no two ways about it: Our provincial parks are an incredible provincial asset about which all Ontarians are extremely proud, whether it's in southern Ontario—the types of conservation parks we have down where I come from, along the northern Lake Erie shore, Turkey Point and places like that; Mr. Bradley knows them well—or whether it's those parks as you get into the near and then farther north. Increasingly those parks become the wilderness parks, the wilderness areas. As proud as I am about those parks and what incredible assets they are for Ontario—assets that have to be treasured, valued and maintained—I'm as proud, if not prouder, of the women and men who work in those parks, OPSEU members who work incredibly difficult jobs with great dedication and great passion.

Just last summer, late in August, I had occasion to attend a gathering of OPSEU workers in Algonquin park. It was just down Highway 60, right around Whitney, that I met with OPSEU members who worked in Algonquin. At the end of the summer season they had a little gathering. They got together and welcomed some of their retirees. I was fortunate to be amongst them, especially since that was the local of Ethel LaValley, president of that local and one of Ontario's great trade unionists, an outstanding woman trade unionist, an outstanding woman aboriginal Canadian trade unionist. You know her, as most folks do, as one of the vice-presidents of the Ontario Federation of Labour, until her recent well-deserved retirement. Leah Casselman was there too, and a whole lot of other OPSEU folks for whom I have the highest of regard. These are the people who work in the parks, who keep them safe, keep them clean, keep them pristine. They keep people safe who are in those parks as well.

I want to address, however peculiar you might find it, the whole issue of wilderness parks, because this legislation, so apparently benign, as the government would have us believe, has attracted a considerable amount of attention from people across Ontario, but notably, in the context of what I have to say, from folks down in southern Ontario and in urban Ontario. There are people who travel great distances. I know folks who drive up to the Atikokan area to Quetico, truly one of the world's great wilderness areas. This is an annual event for them and so many others. The people who go up there are people who have incredibly busy, intense lives, who work jobs that have long hours and who, when they have the opportunity to spend a couple of weeks in Quetico, just find it an incredibly refreshing experience. It has a satori quality to it.

Why I mention that is because—and, look, I've driven past and through Quetico, because I've driven past and through Atikokan any number of times, like I'm sure so many other folks here have, but the concern that was expressed was the rather surreptitious reference in the new definition of “wilderness class parks,” the objective, which, to the shock, dismay, horror and disappointment and in a most frightening way told Ontarians that rather



than being a wilderness park—and I looked at the definition on the ministry's website: "Wilderness parks are large areas left to nature where visitors may travel on foot or by canoe." Look, don't go there if you're not prepared to do some hard work, if you're not in reasonably good physical condition, because if you're travelling on foot or by canoe, you've got to do the portaging, the lifting, the carrying and the climbing. "Offering little, if any, facilities for visitors, these areas provide the solitude of an undisturbed natural setting."

They are indeed pristine. In fact, what you can bring into them—you can't bring bottles. You can't bring the sort of things that would constitute refuse that would be left behind, that would stay there for however many years. But the disappointment and the concern and the fear of so many people, folks down where I come from in the Niagara region who have great respect and regard for wilderness parks like Quetico, was the introduction of travel by motorized means in these parks. That is indeed a shocking thing.

I recall on an earlier occasion—I know the government says, "Oh, this bill's been debated for four days," but if this bill passes, it's for 40 years or more. Surely, when we're talking about maintaining the quality of something as valuable and scarce as the pristine nature of a Quetico or other wilderness park, we should be interested enough to spend a little bit of time debating it here at Queen's Park, shouldn't we, rather than trying to rush off and pass the bill willy-nilly because, oh, the government says, "Trust us"? The world's three greatest lies: "Your cheque is in the mail," "Your money cheerfully refunded," and "Hi. I'm from the government and I'm here to help you." "Trust us," the government says.

**Interjection:** "Primarily."

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, the response by one government member, for whom I have great admiration and regard, was, "Oh, it says 'primarily by non-motorized means.'" Well, you see, you take the corollary of that and that means you can use motorized means, and then you get into the remarkable discussion about "primarily."

Look, I have a second fear, and that is the prospect of privatization of the operation of these parks. It's been entertained in this province more than once, hasn't it, Ms. Martel?

**Ms. Martel:** Yes.

**Mr. Kormos:** It's been entertained by this Parliament more than once. When I connect the prospect of privatization and the pressure to commercialize our parks, including our wilderness areas, and the government's own legislation that in a historic way introduces motorized travel into these parks and doesn't qualify it, other than saying that the primary travel shall be unmotorized, that means the secondary travel can be motorized. Does that mean one of those four-wheelers? Does that mean a two-stroke engine on your small boat spitting out oil mixed with gasoline into the lakes and rivers that fish live in and people drink and swim in and walk in when they're in these parks? Does it mean a big Dodge Magnum truck with four-wheel drive that takes you

where you're going because, "Oh, it's not our primary means of travel; it's just taking us to our campsite that historically folks had to walk or canoe to"?

**1910**

So I share the concern, and I say to the government, "No, I don't trust you." Over the course of three years, you've not given people one single reason to trust you. You promised you'd cap and control the price of electricity. You broke that promise. Do people trust you about electricity? No. You promised you'd extend treatment for kids with autism beyond the age of six. You promised, but you broke that promise. Should people trust you when it comes to kids with autism? No. You promised to restore the child benefit clawback. You promised, you promised, you promised, and people counted on you. But you broke that promise. So the poorest families, women and their kids in this province, have their pockets picked by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals on a monthly basis. You broke that promise. Is there any reason to trust you when it comes to the welfare of the poorest kids in this province? No. So do I trust you when it comes to promises about maintaining the pristine quality of wilderness areas, wilderness parks? Too late, friends, I say sarcastically; far too late.

I'm looking forward to this bill being in committee.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Martel:** I don't know where to start. I'd like to start on the clawback, but I recognize—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Martel:** All right, then. My colleague here has a good point with respect to trust, and it will be all taken care of, especially in light of the three major promises that were made by this government that have been broken.

I raised some more this afternoon on a statement from the Minister of Health that had to do with hiring nurses. The government said in the last election that with a Liberal government 70% of nurses were going to be working full-time in the province of Ontario, and here we are, falling far short of that target in the third year of the Liberal mandate—the third budget and with a \$3-billion windfall. It's the same government that said they were going to hire 8,000 new nurses—

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Additional new nurses.

**Ms. Martel:** Additional new nurses. Thank you, Leader.

Here we are with about 3,052 nurses hired in the province, by the government's own statistics, and 1,000 of those are temporary positions for new graduates in hospitals, up to six months—or maybe even less; three to six months—of employment in the province of Ontario. But the government counts those as new full-time nursing positions.

We've got a huge problem: By 2008, 30,000 nurses in the province of Ontario are going to qualify to retire—30,000. That's going to have a significant impact on patient care in our hospitals, home care, long-term-care homes and public health. The minister comes forward



today and says, "We're going to guarantee jobs for 4,000 new graduates." Well, I sure hope so, because we're going to need 4,000 plus 4,000 plus 4,000 more, aren't we, by 2008, by the time all those nurses who can qualify for a pension take their pension? This government needs a plan on nurses. Should we trust their promises? No. Why should we? And we shouldn't on this bill either.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? There being none, the member has two minutes—sorry, I thought he was sitting down. The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm always pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the comments of the member for Niagara Centre.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hampton:** I hear a Liberal member across the way saying, "You didn't hear anything." I listen better than some of the Liberal members.

The member for Niagara is somebody who has been around this Legislature for 17 years. The member from Niagara Centre has often said he has heard it all before, but I think what he correctly observes about this government is that this government sets new heights for making promises that are never fulfilled. This government sets new records for speeches that are filled with platitudes, loaded with platitudes, but if you check six months after the announcement is made or the speech is given, what do you find? Not much has happened. In some cases, nothing has happened. In some cases, the opposite of what was said has happened.

I would urge the members of the McGuinty government to listen thoughtfully and carefully to what the member for Niagara Centre says. As I say, many times, on many occasions, he's heard it all before, has heard the platitudes, has heard the promises and has also witnessed the fact that not much has come to pass. If I can offer a word of advice to the McGuinty government, it would be better for you if you actually fulfill some of your promises and stop making more empty promises; actually get down to fulfilling some of the promises you've broken heretofore.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Seeing none, the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** My colleague the member for Nickel Belt will be speaking to this bill. My colleague and the leader of the New Democratic Party, Howard Hampton from Kenora-Rainy River, will be speaking to it, and I'm hoping he has enough time during his brief 10 minutes to address the issue of aboriginal rights and the treaty rights of First Nations people.

I find it remarkable that it was the government that brought the motion earlier today to sit this evening. They wanted another sessional day without a question period; that's what evening sittings are all about. But do they want to work? No. Mark my words: I sit here anxiously, eagerly, in anticipation of any one of these backbenchers standing up and explaining to their constituents why they're supporting legislation that will introduce motorized vehicles, motorized travel, into our wilderness parks,

into places like Quetico. Not that it will be the primary form of travel, but it will surely be the secondary, because all that the legislation does is identify wilderness parks—these are the most pristine of the parks, the most pristine areas—as places where visitors travel primarily by non-motorized means. Well, what does that logically mean? It means that the secondary mode of travel is by motorized means: two-stroke outboard motors, four-by-fours, Dodge Magnum trucks, the big 5.7-litre, exhaust-spewing, gas-guzzling trucks. Dalton McGuinty can take his high, big-displacement, gas-guzzler Suburban and drive right through Quetico if he wants to, as long as it's not his primary means of travel but only his secondary. I find that very objectionable. Where are you guys? Stand up, speak to the bill, justify your position.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

1920

**Ms. Martel:** It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate tonight. I think I'm going focus on two areas of the legislation where the bill falls short, and I hope the concerns we're going to address, and that I think other people who come before the committee will address, are actually going to be dealt with by the government.

The first thing that I want to deal with actually has to do with the claim that the government is making, which is getting some support out there, that there will be a ban on industrial development in parks and conservation reserves. It is certainly the case that the legislation, as far as I can see, does ban new industrial logging and the development of mineral deposits within the parks. However, in a different section of the bill, it is also very clear that there are provisions which then would allow cabinet to remove lands from parks and conservation reserves, and one wonders if the point of all that would, of course, be to allow either mineral development or industrial logging in those particular areas.

The bill says very clearly that up to 100 acres can be removed from a park by order of the minister. The bill states that cabinet "can remove 100 hectares or more or 2% ... of the total area of the provincial park or conservation reserve" if it is brought before the Legislature first or if (a) "the disposition is being made as part of a transaction that increases the size of the protected area and enhances ecological integrity," or (b) transfers lands to a federal park, or (c) is part of the settlement of a land claim. With respect to (a), cabinet can remove parts of parks and conservation reserves in one area as long as they add the lost hectares to another area of the park, plus some undefined numbers of hectares to increase the size.

The point that I want to make here has to do with, actually, integrity and ecological integrity, and can we be guaranteed that the shift—the addition, the subtraction, the transfer, the shifting around of land—will actually represent ecological integrity, or will we see some efforts being made to shift, to subtract, to add, to divide, to move around land in order that mineral development and logging that might not occur now because it's supposedly in a park will, in effect, be allowed to occur? What effect



will that activity then have on those areas that are adjacent to the parks?

So while we are very concerned and agree, with respect to ecological integrity, that that has to become a cornerstone of parks management, my concern is how that's going to be protected, how that's going to be developed, and in those circumstances where inevitably there is conflict between those who want to develop resources and those who want to conserve it and have no logging and no mineral development, how are those going to be sorted out? Is it going to be as simple as adding some parts to the park while you take some other land away? Or really, through that process, are you going to be undermining the ecological integrity that we hope this bill is going to be supportive of? Perhaps during the course of the public hearings, there will be more information that the government will provide at the time about how that's all going to work. Really, what is their vision with respect to, if there are going to be some prohibitions, why does the ministry and the cabinet still have some discretion about switching of lands, and what would the purpose of that be for?

The second area that I want to deal with has to do with aboriginal and treaty rights, because there certainly isn't anything in the bill that speaks to aboriginal and treaty rights. Some First Nations and frankly other conservation groups have been public, suggesting that a new section should be added to deal with this omission in this bill. I want to tell you why I think that's important from the perspective of what the government itself had to say with its new relationship with aboriginal people.

Some time ago, over a year ago, the government made quite a grand announcement that it was going to have a change in relationship with aboriginal people, there was going to be a new relationship, there was going to be consultation and discussion and the taking into account of aboriginal and treaty rights with respect to provincial government legislation. I can tell you that when that pronouncement was put to the test on two bills already—and I hope this is not going to be a third—there was a very significant gap between the government's rhetoric on involving aboriginal people in provincial legislative changes and consulting with them and respecting their treaty rights and respecting their aboriginal rights, and what was actually in the legislation that came forward.

The first had to do with Bill 210, with respect to the changes that the Minister of Child and Family Services made to adoption laws, easier adoptions in the province of Ontario. You will recall that during the course of that debate and during the course of the public hearings, many, many First Nation communities, many tribal councils, many aboriginal organizations came to the public hearings and made it clear that they had never been consulted about the bill. The minister announced in her speech that there had been broad consultation, but aboriginal people and aboriginal organizations hadn't been consulted at all. Aboriginal communities have lots of concerns with respect to children's aid societies and

protection of children, and what that means for their children on reserves in particular.

So the first piece of legislation, after the government has proclaimed a new relationship with aboriginal people, happens to be a piece of legislation where the government had no consultation with aboriginal people, where the government, as a result of the pressure that was brought to bear on them by the aboriginal people and political aboriginal organizations, finally had to extend the hearings so that communities and political organizations could have their say. In the end, there were enough changes that the bill was adopted, but it was a pretty sad process in terms of the lack or the failure of the government to actually deal with aboriginal people before the bill had been drafted.

Then we move on to Bill 36, the LHIN legislation. I, as health critic, was the member who sat on that. I can tell you that, despite what the government had to say about involving aboriginal people and a new relationship, again it was clear during the course of the public hearings that aboriginal people, treaty organizations and political aboriginal organizations had never been consulted about the bill and its exact provisions. They had been given a process that was very truncated to try and put in some recommendations to the government, and the government introduced its bill even before those recommendations came in from aboriginal people. That was how interested the government was in hearing concerns from aboriginal people with respect to LHINs and aboriginal access to provincial health care, and whether or not the province of Ontario should be allowed to offload its responsibilities for health care, some of that health care that aboriginal people use, onto LHINs, instead of maintaining that responsibility themselves. Again, during the course of that particular bill, it became very clear that there was a huge gap between the government's rhetoric about a new political relationship with aboriginal people and what that really meant when the rubber hit the road. What it meant was that aboriginal organizations weren't being dealt with, weren't being consulted, their concerns weren't being addressed when provincial legislation was coming forward.

Now we have this bill, Bill 11, which again is silent on aboriginal and treaty rights and the potential that aboriginal communities might have in creating and planning and managing parks and conservation areas. For example, in the bill there is nothing here, nothing at all, regarding the potential for co-management of protected areas within First Nations traditional territories. If we are going to ensure that the rights of First Nations are properly respected in the act, then the act does need to contain a non-derogation clause that would make it extremely clear that existing aboriginal or treaty rights, as Canada recognizes in section 35 of the Constitution Act, are not undermined in any way, shape or form by this bill.

I encouraged the government to do that with respect to Bill 36 as a result of information, as a result of pressure, as a result of requests that we got from aboriginal



organizations to do that. The government members on the committee refused.

Here we go again—another bill before us, silent on treaty rights, silent on aboriginal rights. It will be interesting to see if, during the course of the public hearings, the government will accept an amendment that will make it clear that nothing in this legislation would distinguish or undermine or take away from existing aboriginal and treaty rights.

It also needs to be clear in the bill that prior to establishing a new protected area or expanding an existing protected area, the minister has to identify and consult with all affected First Nations. That isn't in the bill either.

1930

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt for introducing the issues with respect to First Nations into this discussion, because there are a number of aboriginal issues that need to be addressed—some looking forward, some which are contemporary and some looking backwards. The reality is, we already have a number of provincial parks that were established in this province where there are no non-native people living. They are established in the far north, and it is a travesty that some of those parks were in fact created without any consultation with First Nations.

I think the Ministry of Natural Resources over the years, after the fact, shall we say, has tried to create the impression of consultation, but that's like trying to perfect a process that got off to a bad start in the first place. So I was surprised myself when I looked at the bill and could not find any reference to the interests, to the rights, of First Nations.

I got out another set of platitudes that the government presented a year ago, talking about how they wanted a new relationship with First Nations, and I couldn't believe it when I juxtaposed Bill 11 with the announcement that was made a year ago. So I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt for bringing up this important issue.

I'm going to have more to say about this in a few minutes because I want to offer up some specific examples of parks that were created without any consultation with First Nations; in fact, parks that were basically imposed on First Nations and where there's still a continuing grievance today—a grievance which needs to be addressed.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

The member for Nickel Belt.

**Ms. Martel:** I just want to give the government some additional thoughts for amendments with respect to aboriginal peoples. The bill also should clearly state that, prior to establishing a new protected area or expanding an existing one, the minister has to both identify and consult with all the affected First Nations communities whose land or traditional territory may be affected by the expansion or the establishment of the protected area.

Secondly, the government should move an amendment to ensure that in the formulation of management plans for parks, opportunities for co-operative or joint management with local First Nations communities are all fully explored.

Thirdly, in the preparation of park management plans, that there be a requirement to consult a local First Nation representative who has both a traditional knowledge of or indigenous knowledge of the area so that that individual can inform the park planning process.

Fourthly, First Nations should also be able to nominate areas of cultural significance through this process, such as important fish and wildlife areas, areas that are important to maintaining the traditional aboriginal way of life, and sites of villages or rock paintings, for example, that need to be protected. Those sites should all be fully considered by the government to be ones that should be managed, looked after and protected by the relevant First Nation.

So I think there are a number of changes that the government could make very specifically with respect to First Nations that would certainly enhance the opportunities for First Nations with respect to park development but also ensure that the government respects traditional land and sites that need to be protected in a way that they clearly aren't under the bill. The government also has to ensure in the legislation that there is nothing that's going to undermine existing treaty and aboriginal rights, and I think the only way to do that is to have a non-derogation clause, which I certainly hope the government's going to consider.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm pleased to be able to raise some issues with respect to this bill. Actually, I wish I had more time, but we're limited in time this evening, so I'll try to get as many of these issues on the record as possible.

First of all, let me say that I regard this bill as ice cream and apple pie. I think everyone would agree that putting parks policy into legislation is a good thing to do, so I think most people would support the general thrust. Having said that, however, if this is going to be done, I think it's incumbent on this government to get some things right.

I happen to have a map of northern Ontario in front of me as I speak. I want to refer to some specific problems that have to be righted. If you look at a map of northern Ontario and you go up to, I guess it's the 54th latitude, Big Trout Lake, you'll find two First Nations on Big Trout Lake. One is Big Trout Lake First Nation; the other one is Wapekeka First Nation. You'll also find two provincial parks adjacent to Big Trout Lake.

The issue I want to raise is with respect to the Fawn River Provincial Park. The reason I want to raise this issue is because the Wapekeka First Nation is located virtually on the river. The minister will know this because the chief has written to the minister and has raised this issue over and over again, has pointed out that when this park was created in the mid-1980s, at no time was



there consultation, discussion, negotiation with the First Nation. The chief points out that having an MNR parks planner come to the community and ask a few questions about the Fawn River is not consultation. I don't think any of us would regard it as consultation and discussion. Certainly the Supreme Court of Canada, in decisions that have emanated from the court since then interpreting aboriginal rights, says very clearly that that is not consultation. The chief and First Nation at Wapekeka have some real issues, and they have been writing and writing to the Minister of Natural Resources and asking the Minister of Natural Resources to respond to their issues. They want to know when the government of Ontario is actually going to sit down with the First Nation and hold a discussion, a consultation, a negotiation about this park. Frankly, I think the First Nation deserves an answer.

They have a number of specific issues that they want to raise. One of the issues they want to raise is the fact that currently, if they are going to have hydroelectric power in the community, they have to access that through very dirty, expensive and noisy diesel generators. What they'd like to be able to establish is a run-of-the-river turbine on the Fawn River so that they could generate their own electricity and not have to rely upon dirty, expensive and noisy diesel generators. But they're not able to get a response to that issue either.

A second issue they want to raise is that they see an opportunity to build a hunting and fishing camp and engage in tourism activities, but as they understand it, they're prohibited from doing that on the Fawn River. Yet when they go to the MNR website, they find that non-native entrepreneurs who live in, say, Thunder Bay or Toronto are able to advertise bringing tourists to the Fawn River Provincial Park. So aboriginal people are saying, "Wait a minute. We're the only ones who live here. There are no non-native people living here. You might find the odd pilot flying in and you might find a nurse or two. We're the only people living here. We're the people who look after this land, yet we seemingly are denied so far any economic opportunity to benefit from this land and we see a non-native entrepreneur who lives in Toronto or lives in Thunder Bay who routinely takes economic benefit out of this land." They want to discuss that issue with the Minister of Natural Resources, but so far no response from the Minister of Natural Resources—a refusal to respond.

If I may offer some humble advice to the Minister of Natural Resources, I think you should meet and discuss with the chief and council from Wapekeka First Nation about this park. I think the Ministry of Natural Resources should finally conduct a consultation and discussion about this park with the only people who actually live there. That's one example I want to raise.

1940

Another example I want to raise is Quetico Provincial Park. On the border of Quetico Provincial Park you will find Lac La Croix First Nation. Lac La Croix First Nation negotiated in the late 1980s and early 1990s an agreement whereby they can use a limited number of boats and

motors on a limited number of lakes in that provincial park for the purposes of their tourism, employing guides and generating some economic activity. What I hoped to see in this legislation was a clause or a section which said that those agreements which have been negotiated with First Nations in good faith, and which First Nations negotiated with the government of Ontario in good faith, are going to be preserved and continued in this legislation. I think it would be very unwise for the government of Ontario to attempt to get through the back door that which they were not able to negotiate or obtain through the front door.

But I look at the legislation, and do I find any clause addressing this issue? Nothing, and so I'm left to wonder, what do the people of Lac La Croix think? What do they feel? How do they feel when they see this legislation: no clause dealing with aboriginal rights, no clauses dealing with aboriginal interests, and no clauses dealing with the special considerations that they have been able to negotiate? When you read this legislation, it's as if they don't exist.

I next want to address Woodland Caribou Provincial Park, because it's not just aboriginal people who have raised some of these issues. When Woodland Caribou Provincial Park was expanded in the last round of park expansions, the people of Red Lake said they were happy to support the park. Red Lake is a mining community. They were happy to support the expansion of the park, but what they asked for at the time was that for three or four lakes which people from that community have traditionally gone to by snowmobile in the winter for purposes of ice fishing—that they would continue to have that capacity. They're not interested in all-terrain vehicles; they're not interested in motor boats. It was a very specific, very concrete, very limited negotiation of a special circumstance. They're simply saying, "These lakes, which we have always gone to for ice fishing, which are excellent lakes for ice fishing—we want to continue to have to capacity to do that, and we support the expansion of the park." That was agreed to. The then government of Ontario, the then Minister of Natural Resources, agreed to that.

I was hoping to see somewhere in Bill 11 a clause which recognizes that where a community in good faith has supported the expansion of a park and has supported the principles of building the park and the principles of a wilderness park but has said, "We simply want two or three of our traditional activities respected into the future"—I was hoping I'd see that. But once again, it's not in the legislation.

I could go on. I could refer, for example, to Wabakimi park. Wabakimi park went through a very large expansion, a very substantial expansion in mid 1990s. I think most people in Ontario would be very proud of that. Certainly, as Minister of Natural Resources at the time, I was very proud of it. But when we expanded Wabakimi, we gave some undertakings to First Nations who have traditionally lived in the park or who live outside the park but have traditionally used the park. I know right now,



when they read this legislation, they're saying, "Where are our interests reflected here? Where are our rights reflected? Where is what we negotiated reflected?" They can't find it.

To make a long story short, the failure to include these kinds of provisions in this bill is making a lot of people very angry. I think, in terms of the future of the park system and where we want to go, the Minister of Natural Resources has to address some of these issues. Otherwise, he's going to have a very serious problem on his hands.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dunlop:** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the remarks of leader of the third party. I think he has brought some very interesting points forward with a number of examples, particularly from northern Ontario. I think that's a good reason why we should look forward to getting this bill to committee, to bring more of those concerns that the leader has put on the record tonight. I think we've had a fairly substantial amount of debate on this, and if there are amendments to be made to the bill, or possible suggestions for amendments, examples like those Mr. Hampton has used tonight should be put forward at committee and debated again at third reading.

I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments, and I look forward to committee hearings on this.

**Ms. Martel:** I hope the government will use the opportunity of the public hearings and clause-by-clause to deal with some of the First Nation and, frankly, some of the non-aboriginal concerns. The government should look at the committee process and the amendment process as one whereby previous undertakings that were agreed to by the provincial government, be they to protect or move forward the interests of aboriginal or non-aboriginal communities, need to be protected in law. So the particular case with respect to Red Lake, an undertaking that was made by a provincial government and entered into in good faith by the government of the time and also by the community of Red Lake, needs to be respected and enshrined in law so there's no confusion, no question about the legitimacy of that previous undertaking and both parties' commitment to it.

Secondly, I think the government should look at the bill, the public hearings and the clause-by-clause process as an opportunity to try to right some historical wrongs, to try to correct some historical wrongs. The community of Wapekeka has enough problems without having to fight the provincial government with respect to what it can or can't do on its own traditional land and the fact that they're right beside a provincial park. The government should be looking at Bill 11 as an opportunity, as you're changing the parks system, to move much of the policy into legislation to ensure that we're in a position, as a provincial jurisdiction, to right some things that have gone wrong for far too long.

Thirdly, as I said in my remarks and will say again, I think the bill presents some real opportunities for the government to work with First Nations to enhance economic opportunities of First Nations with respect to

parks management. But the government needs to do that by making sure there's going to be adequate consultation with First Nations, both with respect to expanding existing parks or creating new ones; that the government is going to use the expertise of aboriginal people, especially elders, to identify important items in the traditional area; and that the government will look seriously at new economic opportunities for parks management by communities that are right beside these provincial parks or reserves.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I want to indicate, first of all—not that it means much to the people out there, but it does to people around here—that we are in the fourth day of second reading of this bill, which indicates there has been some considerable interest in the bill. I am pleased that there are provisions for public hearings on this, because I think it's important. After you debate the bill, there are people who watch what happens in the House or people who hear about the bill, gather information and want to make comments.

I've often felt that bills are strengthened when the public has an opportunity to make representations—and the public can be a variety of people on a bill such as this. When governments compose a bill, they usually try to do extensive consultation out there. They certainly listen to people within the public service, people within the environmental community and people who have interests in the use of parks, and then they come forward with a piece of legislation. What you find out from debate in the House, and further from the representations that are made by mail, e-mail, telephone or in person, is that there are sometimes minor parts of bill, or perhaps major parts of the bill, which require some attention.

I think governments are wise to entertain those particular views from the public. That's why our government has provided time in committee for this on an ongoing basis. Does it prolong the process? Yes, it does. Are there days when government House leaders over the years have become exasperated by the process? That is true. But I think that when we have this kind of input, particularly at the committee stage when the government and members of the committee have an opportunity to reflect upon it, ultimately the legislation we have is better. The member has raised some issues that I hope will be canvassed during those hearings.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** The government House leader raises an interesting dialogue with regard to committee hearings and that kind of thing, but my experience with this particular government, quite frankly, has been, notwithstanding public representations at committee, that it does not move from its original stand very often, if at all.

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I've been on many committees that have dealt with different pieces of legislation and, quite frankly, the government doesn't listen because usually the members of the committee feel constrained to accept anything that



either the opposition or representatives say to the committee. While the democratic process is supposed to work in that manner—a representation would come forward, a member of the opposition would put forward a reasonable amendment and the amendment would be accepted by a rational process—that's not the experience here. The experience has been that the Liberals send in their parliamentary assistant, who is told to defend the bill to the end, regardless of what they hear at the committee level.

I appreciate what the member opposite is saying, but the fact of the matter is, notwithstanding what good thoughts will be put forward at the committee, it's doubtful that this government would accept any reasoned amendments.

**The Acting Speaker:** The leader of the third party has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to thank all the members for their comments, and I just want to continue on in the same theme that I finished. Yes, the bill is going out to public hearings, but it might be a good idea for the Minister of Natural Resources to actually consider convening a consultation process with First Nations. My sense is that if the government chooses to proceed with this bill without a consultation process specifically with First Nations, you may very well face a court challenge.

As I look at the geography of northern Ontario, and this is just from my own personal knowledge of visiting communities, there are issues at Opasquia Provincial Park, and the people of Sachigo Lake First Nation want to talk about that and want to raise issues; Severn River Provincial Park and the people of Bearskin Lake; I've already mentioned Fawn River; Polar Bear Provincial Park; Winisk River Provincial Park; Pipestone River Provincial Park; Osooskwini-Attawapiskat River Provincial Park. Those are just to name a few.

To my knowledge, there has been no consultation with First Nations about this legislation. You may have talked to the odd aboriginal bureaucrat, but the minister knows full well that that is not going to pass muster with the Supreme Court of Canada as any form of consultation with First Nations.

There are real issues here. I'm sorry that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is not here because the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is trying to usher mining companies into First Nations territory. Almost every day, I get a call from a different First Nation objecting to somebody exploring or drilling on their land without having consulted with the First Nation. I say to the McGuinty government, if you think you want to get more mining companies onto First Nation land drilling or exploring for ore, you'd better resolve this issue first. Otherwise, this could grow very seriously into a big problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? Are there any other members who wish to participate in the debate? Seeing none, the minister may wish to make a statement.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I very much

appreciate the amount of debate that has occurred with this bill. As our House leader has said, there have been four legislative days of debate at second reading. We certainly look forward to taking this bill to committee because public hearings are very important.

As short a time ago as last night, we saw a Global News story on provincial parks and how important they are to people. For much of the time that they like to commune with nature and recreate, the provincial parks are very important. I remember my time as a young parent taking my children to provincial parks and how much we enjoyed them. They are a very special part of living in Ontario and we're very lucky to have them. Any Minister of Natural Resources obviously wants to ensure that they have a bright future and that our park system remains a world leader.

There are a lot of issues that have been brought up by members of the Legislature, and I appreciate that.

Also, because I wear my other hat as minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, I am very concerned about the interests that aboriginals have in this bill and their feeling that they have not been consulted. I am certainly working to address that. As members of the Legislature know, we are not talking about any new parks in this particular piece of legislation. There's no new encroachment on traditional lands with this bill, but it is very important that we keep aboriginal people involved in government activities. In fact, we are internally now working on how we are to consult in all issues where aboriginals have constitutional aboriginal rights. We're soon to have a consultation on that to make sure we get it right, so that on any initiative that involves their particular aboriginal or constitutional rights, we will ensure that we are fully engaged with them and that they have the opportunity that recent court decisions have assured them is their right. So we are working on that. We look forward to committee hearings.

No bill is perfect, no one ministry is perfect and no one has all the right ideas, so we look forward to new suggestions. We're open to improvement and look forward to that as we bring it back here after committee hearings for third reading.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Ramsay has moved a motion for Bill 11. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** To which committee shall the bill be sent?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I'd ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker:** So ordered.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Motion to adjourn. Carried? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

*The House adjourned at 1957.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco,  
Kuldip Kular, Norm Miller, Richard Patten,  
Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,  
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O. Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

## CONTENTS

Monday 8 May 2006

### SECOND READINGS

#### Provincial Parks and Conservation

##### Reserves Act, 2006, Bill 11,

*Mr. Ramsay*

Mr. Dunlop.....3663, 3665, 3671

Mr. Kormos.....3664, 3665, 3667

Mr. Levac..... 3664

Mr. Miller..... 3664

Ms. Martel.....3664, 3666, 3667  
3669, 3671

Mr. Hampton.....3667, 3669, 3672

Mr. Bradley..... 3671

Mr. Sterling..... 3671

Mr. Ramsay..... 3672

Agreed to..... 3672

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 8 mai 2006

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### Loi de 2006 sur les parcs provinciaux et les réserves de conservation,

projet de loi 11, *M. Ramsay*

Adoptée..... 3672













